

JPRS-NEA-92-153
12 November 1992



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JPRS Report

Near East & South Asia

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Near East & South Asia

INDIA

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International Affairs

Ambassador Gonsalves Reports Talks With Russians

93AS0141A Madras THE HINDU in English
4 Oct 92 p 1

[Article by Vladimir Radyuhin]

[Text] Moscow, Oct. 3—The Russian leadership has assured India's outgoing Ambassador, Mr. Alfred Gonsalves, that Russia attached top priority to its relations with India.

Mr. Gonsalves, who left Moscow for New Delhi on Saturday, quoted the Russian State Secretary, Mr. Gen-nady Burbulis, as telling him that India was "a central plank of our policy in Asia."

Mr. Burbulis for the first time revealed to Mr. Gonsalves the contents of a document defining the future directions of Russian-Indian relations which had been approved and signed by the Russian President, Mr. Boris Yeltsin. According to Mr. Gonsalves, the document envisaged a more extensive promotion of bilateral trade, development of civil project cooperation and consolidation of defence cooperation with adequate financing. It also called for considering the granting to India of Government credits in addition to commercial credits.

The financing arrangement for India's defence imports from Russia was qualified as "an unprecedented step" for Russia since it has not given such assistance to any other country.

In a series of farewell calls, Mr. Gonsalves also met the Foreign Minister, Mr. Andrei Kozyrev, the Foreign Economic Relations Minister, Mr. Petre Aven, and a Deputy Defence Minister, Mr. Andrei Kokoshin.

In the words of Mr. Gonsalves, they used the opportunity to convey to him Russia's wish to have "a long-term strategic relationship with India based not only on our defence cooperation but also on our perception of factors that have a role in instability on our borders and in Central Asia." Both sides agreed they had a common interest in preventing the growth of Islamic fundamentalism.

No Arms for Pak.

Earlier this month, Moscow opened a \$800 million credit line to New Delhi for defence purchases in Russia and assured the Defence Minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar, that India could buy any Russian-made weapon systems. At the same time Russia is not going to sell any arms to Pakistan in spite of the latter's keenness to buy them.

Mr. Gonsalves was told by his Russian interlocutors that there was a clear instruction from Mr. Yeltsin to that effect and that the Pakistanis had been given to understand that Russia got its priorities in South Asia, meaning the forthcoming visit of the Russian President to India and the proposed friendship treaty between the two countries.

During his meetings with Russian leaders, Mr. Gonsalves also reviewed preparations for the visit of Mr. Yeltsin to India next January. He said four or more documents would be signed during the visit, including a political treaty and agreements on broader defence cooperation, Government consultations at all levels and cooperation in the field of information.

Ties 'More Orderly Now'

The outgoing Ambassador assessed the current state of Indo-Russian relations as "more orderly than we had with the Soviet Union during the last two years." He referred to the agreement for the delivery of one million tonnes of Russian crude oil to India and said there was a possibility of another two million tonnes reaching India before the end of the year. Russia has promised to sell India three million tonnes of crude next year.

Also, Indian exports to Russia outside the 1992 trade protocol registered \$471 millions in the first six months of this year, which is more than half of the protocol target, India has also secured commercial credit for the import of Russian power plant.

Mr. Gonsalves has served in Moscow during two crucial periods of reform—under Nikita Khrushchev's post-Stalin thaw in the Fifties and Mr. Gorbachev's perestroika which led to the breakup of the Soviet Union. In 1989 he was appointed India's Ambassador to the Soviet Union and has ended his diplomatic career as India's Ambassador to Russia.

Mr. Gonsalves is being replaced by Mr. Rohen Sen, formerly India's Ambassador to Mexico, who had also served in Moscow before as Political Counsellor.

UNI reports:

The Foreign Economic Relations Minister, Mr. Petr Aven, according to Mr. Gonsalves, had confirmed his Government's commitment to honour the contract on the sale of the cryogenic rocket engines to India. He was stated to have explained that the Russian Government had the 'firm' backing of the country's Parliament in the matter.

Mr. Petr Aven also reiterated his Government's will to sort out the problem of rupee-rouble ratio for repayment of debt by India by the end of this year.

Relations With Israel Said Strengthening*93AS0147A Madras THE HINDU in English
27 Oct 92 p 7*

[Article by F. J. Khergamvala: "Ties With Israel Getting Rooted"; boldface words as published]

[Text] Manama (Bahrain), Oct. 26. Within the next few days, India and Israel are to formally assign their respective Ambassadors to each others' Governments. This could set in motion a long process of consolidating a relationship whose foundations have already been laid.

Mr. Pradeep Kumar Singh, who has been in Tel Aviv for about three weeks will present his credentials to Israel's President, Mr. Chaim Herzog, on Thursday October 29. The event takes place exactly nine months to the day since the two countries announced their decision to establish formal ties. In the other direction, Mr. Ephraim Doweik has just ended his farewell rounds in Cairo as Israel's Ambassador and will reach New Delhi on November 6.

After the initial blanket media coverage the nine-month-old baby has been nurtured quietly, as if in a womb. Economic ties have clearly been the public face of the relationship. A number of delegations in diverse subjects have been exchanged, new avenues have been opened and in others the establishing of formal ties have brought out of the closet areas where both countries had long been dealing in. Some areas, notably in defence cooperation, dialogue on nuclear nonproliferation and Israel's help in internal security related issues will remain in the closet.

On either end: From the Israeli perspective the philosophical underpinning to the political relationship became fairly clear from numerous interviews last June with Israeli officials and academics. "Israel sees itself and India as two extremities of a larger contiguous area that is rapidly being unable to contain the spread of militant Islam," remarked a senior Israeli official. For obvious reasons, a secular India cannot articulate its own view in the same language and may not even agree with it fully but New Delhi is certainly not uncomfortable with this rationalisation. One Israeli official said within the parameters of this Israeli perception, there is no limit to Indo-Israeli defence cooperation, taking care that neither would do anything that goes against U.S. national interests.

This is quite a change from India's positions on Arab-Israeli issues and also from the time the Palestinian Intifada started when Israel said defensively that its brutal handling of the uprising was nothing compared to what India was doing to the Sikhs. By some bureaucratic quirk Israel's year book for this year mentions the fact of its relations with China but excludes those with India, established just a week later.

Israeli officials and defence specialists feel that with the passage of time both governments will find themselves in close consultation on ways to negotiate the pressures and pitfalls of the nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty [NPT] as it stands. They see India and Israel facing an identical

predicament. One official was asked to comment on this predicament within the context of nonproliferation pressures: "Assuming that Israel was half a screwdriver's turn away from dismantling a nuclear weapon and India half a turn away from assembling one how can both walk back?" The reply: "The U.S. and others will have to accept the status quo reality of some threshold nuclear states." Broadly, Israel's diplomacy in Asia focusses on the tripod of China, Japan and India. Simultaneously it is making quiet efforts in Islamic areas such as Indonesia, the Maldives and Bangladesh and one official said, "We have taken note of discreet feelers from Pakistan and are willing to wait."

India now treats its equation with Israel on a strictly bilateral footing. Israel has agreed not to hinder any contacts with Palestinians, even in the occupied territories but that is about all. New Delhi has effectively delinked itself from the Palestinian cause on a silent understanding with Tel Aviv that barring occasional domestically expedient rhetoric neither government will say or do anything in areas that do not directly concern them. Israeli diplomacy on its part has now seen a change of style. The Government would earlier leak every contact and deal with third world governments. Today, especially in defence areas the policy is to let the other side talk first.

Farm front: The highlight and the promise on the economic front is in agriculture where the relationship is almost one sided, with India being the recipient of innovative technologies and Israel getting badly needed foreign exchange. Civil aviation links are yet to bear fruit and will probably await the day when Israel's carrier El Al can overfly Arab air space.

Uganda President Meets Delhi Newsmen*93AS0134A Madras THE HINDU in English
15 Oct 92 p 9*

[Text] New Delhi, Oct. 14—The Ugandan President, Mr. Yoweri K. Museveni, has assured all people of Asian origin who had fled Uganda in 1972 that they could repossess their properties if they returned to the country. Alternatively, they could get compensation for the property.

Addressing a press conference at the conclusion of his three-day visit to India, Mr. Museveni said the people returning to his country could expect all protection that the citizens of Uganda enjoy. "The people of Asian origin should not look upon themselves as a separate group. After all, it should be remembered that the atrocities by the Idi Amin regime were not specifically directed against them. All Ugandans suffered under the dictatorship and in the nearly half a million Ugandans killed by the Idi Amin regime, only three persons of Indian origin were murdered," Mr. Museveni said in response to questions about the safety of the returning population.

Asked specifically for guarantee to foreign investors, the President said that his country had enacted a legislation called Foreign Investment Protection Act which protected all foreign investment against expropriation.

Unified market: Referring to his discussion in India, the Ugandan President said that he had emphasised on increased trade and investment cooperation between the two countries. Uganda was part of the 18 countries in eastern Africa which enjoyed preferential trade tariffs. Hence, he felt that Indian companies could set up a base in Uganda and trade with the other member-countries of this arrangement. Additionally, there were plans for a unified African market by the year 2025 and, in this context, he said it would be profitable for Indian companies to start operations there to take advantage of the huge market.

The President also revealed that India and Uganda had worked out the framework for rescheduling the credit extended by India to that country in the past. A technical team from Uganda would be coming here in the first week of November to work out the details. Mr. Museveni put the outstanding amount at around \$60 millions (Rs. [Rupees] 180 crores) while the Indian side put the amount at Rs. 100 crores, which officials later said was the original figure, prior to the devaluation of the rupee.

In view of the agreement on rescheduling the debt, the Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC) had restored the insurance cover for exports to Uganda. This had been withdrawn in the past in view of the payment difficulties there.

The Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Eduardo Faleiro, who was also present at the meeting, said that the two countries had decided to set up a Joint Economic Committee at the officials' level to increase bilateral cooperation. The first meeting of the committee will be held in Kampala in January next year. There was also a proposal to set up a joint business council to further increase private sector trade and investment, he said.

At a low level, bilateral trade between India and Uganda has increased in the recent years. While Indian exports to that country have gone up from Rs. 18.56 crores in 1990-91 to Rs. 31.12 crores in 1991-92, Indian imports from there have increased from Rs. 1.33 crores to Rs. 1.54 crores in the same period. The Ugandan side, however, called for balancing of bilateral trade and it is in this context that offers were made for the sale of phosphate and some non-ferrous metallic ores to India. In return, Uganda wants to import industrial machinery and equipment from India in order to speed up its industrialisation.

During his stay here, Mr. Museveni had discussions with the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, on bilateral and international issues, including Somalia. Mr. Museveni also had meetings with the President, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, and members of the council of Ministers. He also had a meeting with Indian industrialists where trade and investment opportunities were discussed.

Regional Affairs

Migrants Issue Souring Ties With Bangladesh

93AS0138A Madras THE HINDU in English
10 Oct 92 p 6

[Text] New Delhi, Oct. 9—The recent high-profile conference of select Chief Ministers on illegal migration from Bangladesh has backfired on efforts to detect and deport such migrants.

Sources said a section of the Home Ministry did not want the conference on September 28 to be a big affair. Instead of going about the task in a quiet manner the publicity accorded to it had placed fresh obstacles in the path of the Government.

The attempts to deport "Bangladeshis" has raised a storm of protest in the neighbouring country—quite contrary to the hopes raised during the visit of the Bangladesh Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia.

Problems for States: Home Ministry officials do not commit themselves to any firm figure of the extent of migration into India, but warn that "things are turning problematic in many States. Even armed clashes with the migrants are not ruled out."

The Bangladeshi perspective, however, differs. According to Mr. Ziaus Shams Chaudhury, Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh in India, "various figures" had been put out on the extent of migration. Taking exception to recent Indian efforts to push back people into his country, Mr. Chaudhury said, "These persons should not be pushed back. Anybody who tries to cross (into India) should be stopped at the border."

Referring to the recent deportation of 132 persons from Delhi, the Bangladesh official said, "Delhi is many, many miles away from the border." Such efforts to push back people had an adverse impact on the relationship between the two countries.

"Common people," he said, "believed that India had adopted a draconian approach towards the problem of illegal migrants and not taken a humane view of the problem." This is something which worried the Bangladeshi Government, he said. "How can we accept or acknowledge the fact that there are millions of Bangladeshis on the other side (in India). The onus is on the other side (India) to provide evidence of the numbers involved."

Mr. Chaudhury said that even the Indian Supreme Court had taken the view that legal procedures had not been fulfilled in a recent case of deportation which was brought before it. "Problems between the two countries should be dealt with in a humane way. It is important that the temperature is brought down on the issue," the Deputy High Commissioner said. "All this had happened at a time when the relationship between the two countries was improving, he said, citing the fact that the

Tin Bigha issue had been sorted out. "Bangladesh was not "sending" people to India. "We are not encouraging it (illegal migration)."

The press and political parties in Bangladesh have reacted sharply to the Indian efforts at "pushing back" illegal migrants by the Border Security Force (BSF) deployed along the international border.

Identification problems: The task of identifying and deporting people is not an easy one as the Assam experience has shown. In some cases, bona fide citizens (those who came before 1952) have been deported and inquiries opened against many others for no particular reason. Unlike in the early 1980s, the problem is no longer confined to Assam, which had raised the banner of protest leading to a conflagration in which thousands died. The ghost of Nellie and Gohpur still lives on.

Home Ministry officials, however, feel that the existing machinery for identification and deportation of illegal migrants is sufficient. Nothing special is called for in this connection, officials said.

There have been repeated allegations that the enforcement authorities along the border are corrupt and people are let through for a small consideration. If the Government is serious in tackling the problems, the border is obviously the key to the solution. The conference of Chief Ministers resolved to issue identity cards to those living in infiltration-affected zones. How long it takes to issue these cards remains to be seen.

Given the reaction of Bangladesh to increased Indian efforts at deportation of illegal migrants, the Government obviously needs to follow a circumspect line on such a sensitive issue.

The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] has added fuel to the fire—by taking a hard line on the issue and forcing the ruling party to adopt a high-profile stand. Its attempts at projecting the issue as a "Hindu-Muslim one" is also not a secret.

Internal Affairs

Skepticism Regarding New Ambassador to U.S. Claimed Strong

93AS0147F *Bombay TIMES OF INDIA in English*
25 Oct 92 p 14

[Article by Saibal Chatterjee: "Coming to America"]

[Text] At an age when most men are content with sitting back and savouring the fruits of superannuation, septuagenarian Siddhartha Shankar Ray is all set to embark on a new career—diplomacy—in a country he has never been to. The legal luminary, who has had more than his share of ups and downs in a long and chequered political career, is now on his way to Washington, D.C. to assume charge as India's Ambassador to the United States. So far so good. Grandson of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das,

charismatic politico, seasoned barrister, able administrator, keen sports enthusiast, flamboyant man-about-town and lively conversationalist, Ray has a great deal going for him. But is he the best man to fight India's case in the American capital at what surely is an exceedingly crucial juncture in our history?

The scepticism being voiced in certain quarters is definitely not out of place. For someone entrusted with the delicate task of buttressing the bridges of understanding between the world's two largest democracies, Ray has far too many sworn enemies. Unlike his predecessor, Abid Hussain, a widely respected economist who was an unqualified success on Capitol Hill, diplomacy has never been Ray's forte. The Marxists hate him for reasons too well known to bear repetition. So do the Punjabis who got the rough end of the stick during his controversial tenure as governor of the sensitive border state. And there is absolutely no love lost between him and a large number of Congressmen in his homestate, West Bengal.

Abid Hussain's measured performance in Washington will be a hard act to follow. The post is a plum, but the job at hand is tough. Despite marked improvement in Indo-U.S. ties during the past year-and-a-half, areas of dispute persist—the MTCR [Missile Technology Control Regime], NPT [Nonproliferation Treaty], Special 301... Ray will have to muster all his skills in advocacy and the political astuteness at his command to win friends in the United States.

Contradictions and fluctuations have been Ray's constant companions. A Presidency College product, he has an Inner Temple background. He returned to India from Oxford in 1947 and quickly established himself in the legal firmament. He did not, however, let his flourishing career diminish his love for sports. A university blue in cricket, football and tennis, he retains his passion to this day. "I am still very young at heart" is a line the 72-year-old Ray loves to replay. When in Calcutta, he frequently turns up at South Club in shorts and sweat-shirt for a game of tennis.

He entered politics in 1957 under the tutelage of the then West Bengal chief minister, Dr B. C. Roy, who offered him the Congress ticket to contest the assembly elections from the Bhowanipore constituency. Ray grabbed the opportunity with both hands, became an MLA [member of Legislative Assembly] and found a berth in the good doctor's cabinet.

The honeymoon was short-lived. In 1958, Ray quit B.C. Roy's ministerial team in protest against the government's food policy. He contested the next elections as an Independent supported by the Marxists and, what's more, won. But the flirtation with the leftists, too, did not last long and Ray soon returned to the Congress with the blessings of Atulya Ghosh.

During the Congress split of 1969, Ray deserted the Syndicate leaders and sided with Indira Gandhi. The reward was prompt: he became the union education minister in charge of West Bengal the same year. In

1971, he took over as chief minister of West Bengal. That was the beginning of one of the darkest chapters in the history of the state. A police raj was let loose, the Naxalite movement was ruthlessly crushed and countless young men lost their lives.

Ray's popularity nosedived. And then came the Emergency in 1975. A key member of Indira Gandhi's think-tank, Ray turned autocratic and sought to transform West Bengal into his personal fiefdom.

His political career was resurrected when he returned to West Bengal politics as the Congress chief in April 1991. He heralded his homecoming with a resounding electoral victory over Ashok Mitra in the prestigious Chowringhee assembly constituency. Barring the 1986 Bolpur bypoll, in which the CPM's Somnath Chatterjee trounced him, and in the 1984 Lok Sabha election from Darjeeling, which he contested as an Independent in a fit of pique on being denied a Congress ticket by Rajiv Gandhi, Ray has won every battle of the ballot with a lot of spare.

If he never managed to recapture the stature he attained in the 1970's, it was primarily because he fell foul of Sanjay Gandhi. So he returned to his lucrative legal practice and stayed away from the limelight until Rajiv Gandhi appointed him the governor of trouble-torn Punjab on April 1, 1986. The rationale was clear: He was expected to do to the terrorists what he had done to the Naxalites in Bengal. He did try this and in the bargain made more foes than he deserved. His tenure in Punjab was marred by allegations of serious human rights excesses. It was on his recommendation that the democratically elected Surjit Singh Barnala government was dismissed and President's rule imposed.

There have already been veiled suggestions that his life may be in danger. But Ray and the Indian government have rightly chosen not to give credence to these morbid murmurs. There can, however, be little room for complacency. The new Indian Ambassador will have to be constantly on his toes.

It is a battle that his exposure to the murky machinations within the faction-ridden West Bengal Congress and his days in the thick of the action in Punjab must have prepared him for. In fact, so great is the aversion some Bengal Congressmen feel towards Ray that they could barely conceal their glee when it became known that he was being sent to the U.S. They see the appointment as a blessing in disguise, a welcome elimination of a troublesome political liability.

In Washington and in New Delhi, however, no one is writing off Siddhartha Shankar Ray. Not as yet, at any rate.

Indian Military Claimed Guilty of Excesses in Kashmir

93AS0116H THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA in English 16 Oct 92 pp 3, 6-7

[Article by Sukhmani Singh: "The Men Behind the Masks: Into the Mind of the Kashmir Terrorist"]

[Text] The time was 7:30 pm. The date: July 31, 1992. Eighteen-year-old Taj-ud-din Farooqi was lounging in his Lal Bazar house in downtown Srinagar, engrossed in watching the Barcelona Olympic Games on television. Brilliant, good-looking, he was home on a vacation from Bangalore where he was doing a course in computer science and technology. His father, younger brother of the Imam of the Hazratbal mosque, had gone there to offer *jumma* prayers. Suddenly, he was startled by the staccato burst of gunfire on the street outside. There was rapid cross-firing between the militants and personnel of the Border Security Force (BSF). Two jawans were killed. Seething with fury, seven GSF [expansion not given] jawans jumped over the wall, strode through the garden and knocked on Taj-ud-din's door. Immediately, Taj's 14-year-old brother, Imtiaz, walked towards the door and opened it, thinking it was his father. In an act of mindless retaliation, the jawans slammed Imtiaz on the head and chest with a rifle butt. He died on the spot. When Taj-ud-din rushed forward, he was dragged out into an adjoining lane and shot in the abdomen. His pretty sister, Ruhi, 22, and her mother were also beaten up by the jawans. Taj-ud-din, who had passed his first year with a distinction, did not live to see his result. He died in his mother's arms two hours later. Today, she is an emotional wreck.

Incidents like this have become increasingly common in the bleeding vale of Kashmir. And most of these senseless killings are perpetrated by personnel of the Border Security Force. The message is clear—terrorise the people into submission. And with every such incident, the people's hatred for the Indian forces receives a fresh impetus. BSF Inspector General I.G. Patel allegedly remains in regular touch with the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] top brass, and willingly toes their hard line on Kashmir. After serving in the Valley in various capacities for the last seven to eight years, he has just received an extension in reward for his services. Confesses a senior government official, "People feel that if Patel is posted out of the Valley, the situation will improve." Though Director General of Police [DGP] B.S. Bedi, who coordinates the activities of the army, police and the security forces, claims that he has succeeded in reducing the number of 'indefensible acts by para-military forces' (see accompanying interview), insiders reveal that he has no control over men like Patel, who enjoys the confidence of governor Girish Chander Saxena. Repeated attempts to contact Patel, however, were unsuccessful.

Rather than attempting to create an atmosphere conducive to holding elections—an inconceivable thought at present—the authorities are stepping up their hostilities.

"You can't run with the hare and hunt with the hounds," criticises a top official in the state. Witness the recently launched Operation Tiger which is different from previous operations only insofar as it tacitly sanctions deaths during interrogation and marks an acceleration in the number of fake encounters which have become a routine occurrence in strife-torn Punjab. Although DGP Bedi avers that the intention is not to kill, but to catch militants by surprise, senior police officials privately confess that it is a 'catch and kill' policy. As a senior government official thunders, "Militants should be segregated and shot." This line of action is blindly pursued even in cases where the man's complicity has not been ascertained. Official hand-outs issued by the authorities blatantly attempt to whitewash such cases. Take the case of the district commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen, Aurangzeb, and three others. On September 14, this year, officials announced that the four had been arrested while holding a high-level meeting in Sadakadal in Srinagar. The next day, an official hand-out stated that the four militants had been killed in an encounter. Similarly, on September 2, Iqbal Zargar, deputy chief of the al Umar Mujahideen, was arrested in the morning. At 9 pm the same day, police officials confirmed his arrest. The next day, an official handout said that he had been killed in an encounter the previous morning.

On September 18, two gunshots were fired in the peaceful Srinagar locality of Abe Guzar. A few minutes later, a bulletproof BSF vehicle roared out. Within minutes, angry crowds spilled onto the streets in a spontaneous protest. Smoke bombs had to be dispersed to control them. Fresh drops of blood lay spattered on the floor of a boiler room indoors. At the police control room was the freshly shot body of 15-year-old Mohammed Yaqub, a newspaper hawker-cum-auto driver. It was a gory sight, with part of his arm ripped off, exposing the entrails. A bullet hole had, in addition, pierced his chest. His crime? Hauled out of his auto opposite Srinagar's famous Baba Dharam Dass Mandir early in the morning, he was taken to Abe Guzar to identify militants. Unable to do so, he was ruthlessly shot. The official hand-out issued the same evening reads otherwise: "Militants fired on a security force vehicle this morning at Abe Guzar. The fire was returned. During the firing, one militant was killed..."

It is this killing of innocents coupled with inhuman torture during interrogation (see box) which is, ironically, giving a boost to militancy in the state. Militant organisations exhibit video recordings of the bereaved families of such innocents, the sympathy generated helping to strengthen their movement. To compound matters, militants killed in fake encounters attain martyrdom overnight, even amongst their critics. As a senior government official in Srinagar points out, "You are eliminating militants in arithmetical progression and generating a new set of militants by geometrical progression. It is the growth of militancy which has to stop." An old Muslim shopkeeper in Pampore bursts out angrily, "*Inhine ugarwaadi banaye hain, aam logon ko maara hai.*"

Contrary to reports being circulated by the government, the people's support of the movement is growing by leaps and bounds. This is despite the fact that extortions by certain sections of militants have been on the rise in the Valley. Driving through the scenic countryside, every person one encounters boils over with hatred for the Government of India, personified by the Indian forces. The militants have acquired a cult-like status in the eyes of the average man. Even children no longer dream of becoming doctors and engineers, their ambition is to become 'mujahids.' Whenever anyone is killed, word spreads like wild fire, and once the forces have retreated, hundreds of people pour into the streets. Yet, so pervasive is the fear of the forces that very few venture out after dark. Those who do, are harassed and humiliated. Once a journalist was halted and accosted by the security forces just outside Srinagar at 7 pm. Despite showing them his press card, they warned, "Had you come 15 minutes later, the card would have remained in your pocket." Yet, in the city, curfew comes into force only after 10 pm.

Driving through a village at 7 pm, one sees people running around in a frenzied fashion, screaming out the warning: "The army is coming." Apparently, they have received news that the forces are approaching for a crackdown.

Paradoxically, due to the destructive approach of the authorities, even those who were earlier anti-militant have begun veering around to them for want of an option. What is worse, as Professor Abdul Ghani, leader of the Muslim Conference, reveals, "When the forces of Indian 'insecurity' enter a house, they speak like rank communalist, as members of an occupation force." Elaborates Taj-ud-din's sister Ruhi, tears in her eyes, "*They yelled 'Saale Musalmaanon, hum cumko zinda nahin chhodenge.'*" As a consequence, as Ghani remarks, "*The allegation has deepened so rapidly that it is impossible for India to win over the people at any cost.*"

Quick to cash in on the people's mood, militant organisations have also decided to close ranks. Recently, the pro-independence Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and the pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen made a significant compromise on their ultimate goal. Outlines Zain-ul-Abidin, chief spokesman of the JKLF, "We have always maintained that it is the Kashmiris who are suffering and they alone have the right to decide the future themselves. This has been successfully put across and convincingly accepted by the Hizbul Mujahideen." (See box interview.) To arrive at such an understanding has taken time and, as Abidin confesses, "Confidence building is not always as smooth as one would wish it to be." The JKLF has always enjoyed the support of the common man, but on the heels of this unity, the people's imagination is being fired by the numerically more powerful Hizbul Mujahideen and the Al-Jehad.

In the current inflammatory atmosphere, political leaders like Professor Ghani have failed in their original

mission to make the gun subservient to politics. Unperturbed, the intellectual leader asserts, "We are all freedom fighters; we fight with chairs, pens, guns; we follow a strategy—our strategy is to kill Indian expansionist designs." Relegated to the back-seat at present, they plan to make it to the forefront of the struggle in the months to come. On the anvil is a bold political action plan termed Zarb-e-Muslimeen, which envisages that all the people of Kashmir—young, old and disabled—shall come out onto the streets all over the Valley and, declares Ghani with enviable bravado, "demonstrate to the whole world that we have the will to fight on, that we shall either win or perish."

This plan is motivated by the conviction that "the Indians are determined to kill us all, but," he underlines emphatically, "we shall not die like sheep in the slaughter house, we shall offer our bosoms, let them fire at us." If it seems inconceivable that Kashmiris will willingly commit harakiri, a government employee disagrees: "It is the security forces that can compel them to come out onto the streets. It is easier to face a man on the streets rather than in an interrogation centre."

Although militant leaders claim they have the upper hand and Bedi remarks that "the situation is in our grip," the future of Kashmir seems bleak. Confesses an army officer, "It is a no-win situation." And with the communalisation of the whole problem, advocate and congress stalwart Mali Mohi-ud-din, predicts, "If the situation goes on boiling on both sides, it can damage the subcontinent."

Kashmiri Militant Leader Interviewed on Plans, Goals

93AS01161 THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF
INDIA in English 16 Oct 92 p 4

[Interview with Syed Salah-ud-Din Interviewed by Sukhmani Singh: "We Plan To Hit India Economically"]

[Text] Brown slouch cap perched on his head, Syed Salah-ud-din, supreme commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen, squats comfortably in a disused building, sipping *namkeen chai* and nibbling at a *roti*. Dressed in the ubiquitous *pherans*, his men line the walls around him, gazing at him with awe. Bearded, broad-shouldered, with a forceful voice, he looks every inch the leader of the largest and most feared militant outfit in the Valley—the Hizbul Mujahideen, the militant wing of the Pakistan-based Jamaat-i-Islami. Excerpts from the hour-long interview:

Q: Your childhood ambition was to become a doctor. Why did you change your mind?

A: During my academic career, I came to know the miserable condition of the Kashmiri people—the oppression, suppression and depression which they had been subjected to by India. Kashmiris had been deprived of their rights, economic, political and social. As I grew up, what irked me particularly was the fact that the Kashmiris had been deprived of the basic right of self-determination. I have seen the plebiscite movement which was launched in 1956. I have observed the religious movement—the *Moi Muhaddas Tehriq* (the holy relic movement). And during this period, I contested elections three times, including the most historic one—that of 1987, on the mandate of the Muslim United Front (MUF). This was the turning point when I realised that the slaves have no vote in the so-called democratic set-up of India. Kashmiris are slaves. In 1987, when everyone voted in favour of the MUF, against the Rajiv-Farooq Abdullah accord, when the entire population of Kashmir rejected the Congress and the National Conference, I contested from the Illiyapora constituency, where there was mass rigging. The youth who were involved in the electioneering, were subjected to third degree brutal torture. I was myself arrested from the counting hall at the medical college hostel, Bemina, taken to Hiranagar, and detained there for nine months. Prior to this too, I had been arrested and detained twice. After this, I was arrested once again in 1989 under the Public Safety Act enacted by the late Sheikh Abdullah. After graduating from the university, I got affiliated to the Jamaat-i-Islami because I felt that was the only party which fought for the rights of the down-trodden Kashmiris.

Q: Where did you receive your training?

A: The training camps of Khoos, Afghanistan, in 1990.

Q: How often do you visit Pakistan?

A: I had only been there once two years ago.

Q: Your organisation is one of the most powerful in the state, but you have not been able to expand your popular base. Why is that?

A: (*Smiles proudly*) You agree that it is the most powerful? You have the report that it is the biggest organisation?

Our movement already had a popular base by the grace of Allah. Ours is not just a militant movement, it is a popular movement. There is an attempt on the part of the enemy to create a gap between popular support and the militants.

Q: What is the total strength of your organisation?

A: I can't give you the exact strength in the interests of the movement, but it is between 13,000 and 20,000.

Q: How many are waiting to cross the border?

A: We have 4,000 Afghans who are presently undergoing training in Afghanistan and approximately 3,500 in our base camp in Muzaffarabad.

Q: What motivated you to forge an understanding with the JKLF [Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front], whose views are so different from your own?

A: We already agree on one goal—that is to liberate each and every part of the Kashmiri territory from the Indian forces.

Q: But there was a clash recently between members of your organisation and those of the Al Jihad. What steps are you taking to prevent a repetition?

A: Unfortunately, enemy infiltrators in the rank and file of the Mujahideen are playing this mischief and that creates a confrontation at the inter-party level. I don't think it is any party confrontation. We only have a difference about the future of Kashmir. The JKLF believes it is in the better interests of the people of Kashmir to remain independent. We say that it is in their best interests to be a part of Pakistan. We want to create a greater Muslim State in South-East Asia. But neither of us can thrust our opinion upon the people. The final verdict of the people is to be accepted.

Q: Since you are keen on tripartite talks, if Pakistan goes ahead with bilateral talks with India to solve the Kashmir issue, will you think it is a betrayal of the people's aspirations?

A: No. We believe Pakistan will never compromise on the interests of the Kashmiri people. We have faith in it.

Pakistan may continue with its bilateral talks, it is its own problem to tackle it. But no settlement can be reached without the active physical participation of representatives of Kashmir. Kashmir is the real party in the case. Pakistan or India will not decide by themselves. It is not possible.

Q: What are your plans for the future? Will you be changing your strategy?

A: Our plan is to expand our activity beyond the Jammu region. We feel since the Indian forces are destroying our economy under a well-planned policy, we want to retaliate, we want to hit India economically. This is our first strategy. They have destroyed our economy, they have looted our property. We hate the political leadership of India which does not accept the historical reality of the Kashmir issue. And we hate the brutal Indian forces. We say, it is in the interests of the people of India and the subcontinent to settle the Kashmir issue amicably to save two-thirds of their budget from being spent on defence to enslave Kashmir by the dint of force.

Q: So you plan to strike outside Kashmir?

A: Definitely. If India does not stop economic destruction, we have decided to retaliate in every nook and corner. We feel that more than physical loss, it is economic destruction which will compel India to accept our right.

Q: In a BBC interview recently, you admitted that there have been excesses on the part of your men. What steps are you taking to curb them?

A: No, I did not admit it. If you see our movement in its historical perspective, it is a morally justified, humanitarian movement. And in order to label it a terrorist movement at the diplomatic and international level, India has infiltrated RAW agents into the rank and file of the mujahideen. It is these elements that are sometimes raping women, looting houses, kidnapping children, etc. I have said in my interview that it is not the mujahideen but it is these infiltrate elements which are doing these acts just to sabotage the movement so that it will be deprived of international diplomatic support. I will not accept that these acts are being committed by the mujahideen of Kashmir, they have their code of conduct, their own discipline. Yet, despite this, we have a few examples—in four cases, I have given the death sentence to our own mujahideen.

Q: How feasible is it for two divergent organisations like the HM and the JKLF to function in coordination?

A: We are not two divergent organisations, we are two convergent organisations.

Q: The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] has been advocating the trifurcation of Kashmir into the states of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. Are you also in favour of this?

A: Not at all, that is not acceptable to us. They have their own communal politics, they are the veteran enemy of the Indian forces. It is our prophecy that the BJP will be responsible for the further division and disintegration of India. As for their theory about the trifurcation of J&K [Jammu and Kashmir], it is a myth. It is their false perception, it is not possible. Even if we give our blood for it, we want to live as the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Q: You had mentioned earlier that you might consider issuing a joint call to the Kashmiri pandit migrants to return to the Valley. What is your latest stand?

A: At the moment, it is impossible to reconcile on this issue because we have a lot of suspicions about our Hindu brethren who left under Jagmohan's plan. We did not compel them to migrate from here. Since 1947, 36,000 communal riots have taken place in India, but Kashmir is the only paradise where not a single communal riot has taken place. I don't know what the justification was for Kashmiri Hindus to leave Kashmir. It was a planned conspiracy of Jagmohan. I'm sorry that our Hindu brethren have forgotten our traditional brotherhood.

At present, we also have reports that the migrants in Jammu have joined hands with the enemy forces. They are undergoing training in the camps of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. They will come here and generate what is known as counter-insurgency. We will not allow them to come hereunder these conditions. First, they have to join our movement as a part of J&K, make their

own contribution. Only if they prove themselves to be a part and parcel of the movement can we think about their return.

Janata Dal Initiatives, Drift Leftward Viewed

Posts for Minorities, Women

93AS0113A *Bombay TIMES OF INDIA in English*
19 Oct 92 p 15

[Text] New Delhi, 18 October: The Janata Dal today unanimously resolved to give 60 percent representation in the party forum to members of minorities, backward castes, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women. The party spokesman announced at the end of the national executive meeting that it would reflect in the next organisational elections, reports PTI.

The Janata Dal president, Mr. S.R. Bommai, who presided over the two-day national executive of the party, said the decision to provide representation to these sections in the party posts was incorporated in the party constitution, the party spokesman, Mr. Hari Kishore Singh, told reporters.

The suggestion to provide for 60 percent representation to minorities, backward castes, SCs [Scheduled Castes], STs [Scheduled Tribes] and women in the party posts was made by the former prime minister, Mr. V.P. Singh, at the party's plenary session held at Puri in Orissa in March 1991.

The spokesman said it was also decided to finalise the party's document on the new economic policy along with the Hegde committee report on party restructure at the next national executive scheduled in December.

The spokesman also released copies of resolutions containing the Janata Dal's action plan for implementation of the Mandal commission recommendations.

The party will organise a social justice rally at the Boat Club here on 7 November and a two-day convention on agricultural policy on 8 and 9 November.

It will also observe an anti-new economic policy week from 18 November to protest against rising prices, corruption and the securities scam through satyagrahas and dharnas.

The senior Dal leaders, including Mr. George Fernandes, Mr. Sharad Yadav, Mr. Surendra Mohan, Mr. Chandrajit Yadav, Mr. Wasim Ahmed, Mr. Devendra Yadav, Mr. Raghupati, Mr. Muchkund Dube and Prof. Jayalakshmi, attended the meeting.

More Than Symbolism

93AS0113B *Bombay TIMES OF INDIA in English*
20 Oct 92 p 12

[Editorial—"Symbol and Substance"; italicized words as published]

[Text] The decision of the Janata Dal national executive to reserve 60 percent of party offices for members of SCs [Scheduled Castes], STs [Scheduled Tribes], other backward classes and minorities may appear to be *pro forma* repetition of the resolve made at the party's conference at Puri in 1991. The move is not, however, without substance. For one, it is not a sudden symbolic act like the many that have been announced from time to time by Mr. V.P. Singh, the spiritual, if not formal, leader of the Janata Dal. It is true that the proposal was sprung upon the party's bigwigs by Mr. Singh at Puri and was adopted by the general delegates by acclaim rather than after due deliberation of its impact on the organisation's constitution. Subsequently, however, the collective leadership of the party has had the occasion to consider the implications at length and the present announcement follows the recommendations of an organisational committee headed by Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde. It would not be correct, therefore, to dismiss the move as mere symbolism. On the contrary, even token and often populist moves—aimed at the "weaker sections"—by the Janata Dal leadership do appear to influence the actions of other parties too. The choice of candidates for Rajya Sabha seats, the vigorous debate in the context of the election of the President and the Vice-President and even organisational polls point to this Congress president, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, was constrained to express his unhappiness at the fact that the depressed sections had not found adequate representation in the elected Congress working committee.

Indeed, this development does seem to validate at least part of Mr. V.P. Singh's claim of reorienting politics from being a matter only of political parties to one determined by "social forces." This is despite the fact that his understanding of such "social forces" is not necessarily correct—witness the dichotomy between the economic power and the claimed social backwardness of at least some of the OBCs [expansion not given], a factor that complicates political realities and makes Mr. Singh appear to be ignoring inconvenient obstacles. In any case, in a recent interview to a news magazine, Mr. Singh has said in his defence that he did not see himself as a social reformer but as "a social analyst." As an active political figure engaged in making careful calculation, Mr. Singh's analysis of social changes has impelled him, and willy-nilly his own party and others too, in a particular direction which he considers to be one of greater equity. The danger in moving in such a manner is that it is likely to increase expectations among the target groups and, if the expectations are belied by merely symbolic acts, the whole exercise can prove to be counter-productive.

Challenge to Communists

93AS0113C Bombay *TIMES OF INDIA* in English
19 Oct 92 p 14

[Article by Dipankar Bhattacharya: "Left Must Keep Janata Dal at Arm's Length"; italicized words as published]

[Text] Despite cataclysmic changes in the erstwhile socialist camp and a radical shift in the domestic milieu, there has been little physical depletion in the left ranks who have stood their ground amid all the ideological offensive of the right. The reason is not difficult to understand. While both the confirmed and the converted free marketers in India are still waxing eloquent about the wondrous potential of the new policies and the growing obsolescence of the left, their mentors in Japan and America are once again displaying a better understanding of the Indian complexities. Many Japanese experts have already advised the Rao government to slow down its liberalisation drive while IMF-watchers in the U.S. itself have warned India to develop its own Indianised version of the structural adjustment programme or face the music.

The CPI [Communist Party of India] and the CPM [Communist Party of India-Marxist] have steadily distanced themselves from the Janata Dal and there are reasons to suspect that this may not just be a reverse swing of the tactical pendulum from the secular-democratic JD [Janata Dal] back to the secular-nationalist Congress. One does see a healthy emphasis on struggles on basic and burning issues and a welcome appreciation of the urgent task of left unity. Joint actions by left-led mass organisations are increasingly becoming the reality in different states and on different fronts.

Land Struggle

In Bihar, the current phase of land struggle has been going on under the united leadership of the IPF [Indian People's Front], the CPI, the CPM and other left parties. Bihar has also witnessed a bandh on 30 September by left-led student organisations in protest against the ongoing assault on education. In yet another united left move, several left-wing women's organisations met in Patna in August to chalk out a common line of action to combat the offensive of right reaction. The convention has been followed by nationwide anti-rape demonstrations on 21 September.

With sustained efforts and a consistent accent on unleashing mass agitations, these small steps could indeed pave the way for a powerful left resurgence in India. Such reassertion of the independent identity of the left, long subsumed by the ideology of centrist opportunism, could prove to be a watershed in the history of mainstream political alignments in India.

But the JD is already trying to regain its lost initiative, especially vis-a-vis the left. In Bihar, Mr. Laloo Yadav has unfurled the banner of united Bihar to mean away the left from the path of mass agrarian struggles. And, after the demonstrated decline of the popular appeal and

electoral efficacy of the Mandal mantra, the JD in its recent strategy session of 21-23 September has reportedly decided to abandon the party's exclusive reliance on the Mandal plank and adopt a comprehensive agenda to incorporate issues and concerns like the new economic policy, federalism, decentralisation and secularism.

Active Role

While welcoming any shift in the JD's approach towards a more active oppositional role the left must expose the centrist opportunism that has become the hallmark of Janata Dal politics. In fact, this is the threat that binds Mr. V.P. Singh, Mr. Laloo Yadav and Mr. Biju Patnaik in a single party. Take the case of the new economic policy. The JD has now decided to come out with an alternative policy document. Well, even if we leave aside the strong pro-monopoly, pro-MNC [multinational corporations] bias in the JD's own economic policies in the recent past, how are we to reconcile the rhetoric of Mr. Fernandes and Mr. Dandavate with the privatisation spree in Mr. Biju Patnaik's Orissa where even the Chilka Lake has been handed over to the Tatas? How are we to square the JD's demagoguery on economic policy with Mr. Biju Patnaik's recommendations as the chairman of the austerity panel of the National Development Council, the post which he has given up now in protest against the Centre's refusal to take the risk of declaring an immediate DA-freeze and a complete curb on bonus and leave travel allowance?

Mr. Laloo Yadav, who ran his government for two years in collaboration with the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, now says a separate Jharkhand state can only be created over his dead body. How does this aggressive Bihari chauvinism co-exist with the JD's renewed double speak on decentralisation and federalism? Two years ago, Mr. Laloo Yadav had ganged up with the notorious Mr. Ram Lakhan Singh Yadav to stem the IPF challenge in Patna and Bhojpur. Now that Mr. Ram Lakhan Yadav has turned against him, Mr. Laloo calls it a blunder to have inducted Mr. Ram Lakhan later in the JD and got him elected as an MP [member of Parliament]. In a complete *volte face* the messiah of the backwards is now hobnobbing with the Brahmin Mr. Jagannath Mishra on a common anti-Jharkhand plank. It is only by ruthlessly exposing this centrist opportunism that the left can advance the cause of real democracy in India.

U.P. Government Restoring Historical City Names

93AS0116A Bombay *TIMES OF INDIA* in English
23 Oct 92 p 9

[Article by Arvind Singh Bisht: "BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] Seeks To Rename Allahabad"]

[Text] Lucknow, October 22: By renaming Allahabad and Faizabad with their old-time names, the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has made yet another subtle move to project itself as the protector of the cultural heritage.

Significantly, the latest move of the government comes close on the heels of its recent decision to rewrite the history textbooks and insert chapters on the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute, Vedic mathematics and poems in praise of Rana Pratap, Shivaji and others who fought against the Muslim rulers in the past.

Founded by the Moghul Emperor Akbar in 1583 after building a great fort named Allihabad (city of God), Allahabad has now been renamed as Prayaga Raj, a well-known pilgrim centre of Hindus there. Similarly, Saket will be the new name of Faizabad, a district which has shot into importance due to the vexed Ayodhya tangle.

The state cabinet which took a decision to this effect on Tuesday, has also apprised the Centre about it. The approval of the Centre is now awaited as many of its offices exist specially in Allahabad. Independent observers are, however, sceptical about the Centre's approval to the changes in the names of these districts.

The district which was capital of erstwhile Avadh state, was created by the then Nawab Sadat Ali Khan. But according to Buddhist scripture, the place had been described as Saket and even at present a university is named after it there.

The state government is also actively considering the renaming of Kanpur Dehat, a district carved out some four years back from Kanpur district itself. The name being considered for it as Brahmabrat, a small pilgrim centre there at present.

The renaming of these districts is not new. Already the state government has renamed Mughalsarai as Deen Dayal Nagar after the rightist thinker Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, whose birth anniversary was observed with some fanfare recently. The late Upadhyaya was killed in Mughalsarai in 1968 in mysterious circumstances. Similarly, the civil hospital in the state capital has been renamed after the late Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, founder of the Jana Sangh.

When asked, the urban development minister, Mr. Lalji Tandon, said that there was no immediate plan to rename Lucknow. Significantly, Mr. Anal Behari Vajpayee had recently questioned the clamour among some BJP men to rename it as Laxmanpur, after the name of Lord Laxmana, who is believed to be the founder of the city, according to the popular Hindu belief. However, it remained a fact that the BJP during its recent rally held in Lucknow renamed the famous Begum Hazrat Mahal Park as Urmila Vatika, wife of Laxmana.

While leaders of various political parties see the BJP's move as its commitment to play politics around the bogey of the past glories, BJP leaders defend themselves saying that the change in the names of the districts has been done time and again in the past in all parts of the country and the world.

Citing examples, Mr. Tandon said that the name of Bombay had been replaced by Moombai, Trivendrum as Thiruvananthapuram, and Madras as Tamilnadu. The

name of Benaras was changed Varanasi by late Dr. Sampurnanand during his chief ministership. There was nothing new about the changes in the names, he added.

Strongly defending the government move, the state president of the BJP, Mr. Kalraj Mishra, said that it should have been done much earlier. He said that there was no reason for panic and people should not link it with the politics.

"I feel it will inculcate patriotic feeling among the people. I do not think that anybody will oppose such a move, but if at all anybody creates problem due to this count, he or she cannot be termed as a patriot. After all why should anybody should identify with those who invaded this country and heaped insult on it." By changing the names, the government had made an attempt to undo with the sign of slavery, he added.

Reacting sharply to it, the Janata Dal (A) legislature party leader, Mr. Kailash Nath Singh Yadav, said that change in names would hardly bring any change about the well-being of people. It would have been better if the BJP government had changed the names given to various places by the British. What was most important was to implement welfare schemes rather than to arouse religious sentiments, he added.

Plans of Former U.P. Chief Minister Examined

93AS0116F New Delhi INDIA TODAY in English
31 Oct 92 p 26

[Article by Javed M. Ansari: "Mulayam Manoeuvres Again"]

[Text] The news was not that it happened but that it happened so late. When former Uttar Pradesh [UP] chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav finally parted ways with the Samajwadi Janata Party (SJP) in late September, he surprised neither his supporters nor his opponents. Ever since last year's electoral rout of the SJP, everyone knew that a canny politician like Mulayam would not hitch his fortunes permanently with a party so obviously without a future.

"It was a marriage of convenience between two incompatible people," says Subhashini Ali, former CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist] member of Parliament from Kanpur. With little in common between Mulayam and party founder Chandra Shekhar, in terms of ideology and personality, the break was inevitable. For Mulayam the choice was clear—dump the party and its leadership which was totally out of synch with the political reality of the times, and strike out before it was too late.

Stung by the split, Chandra Shekhar preferred to keep his powder dry for the movement. But for his *bete noire* V.P. Singh, it appeared to be poetic justice at last—the Mulayam-Chandra Shekhar duo orchestrated the first split in the Janata Dal in 1990, toppling his government. Singh has now sent the right signals for a possible link-up with Mulayam by describing him as an upright man.

Though he has been guarded in his reaction to the SJP, Singh nurtures hopes of working again with Mulayam in Uttar Pradesh and an electoral alliance at the time of elections. Barring their personal angularities, Mulayam and Singh are more likely allies given their vote-banks of backwards and minorities. Together they can be expected to provide a formidable challenge to the BJP in the state. The left parties on their part have managed to persuade the two to share a platform against communalism as a starting point in their joint actions in the state.

Mulayam's main problem has been his egotistical, paranoid nature. The one-time schoolteacher from Etawah is forever imagining conspiracies, and prefers to be the boss. The schism between him and Chandra Shekhar widened at the time of the recent Rajya Sabha elections. Commensurate with its strength, the SJP was entitled to just one seat from Uttar Pradesh, and Mulayam went ahead and nominated his brother Ram Gopal, causing heartburn in the party. Working to a transparent strategy, Mulayam first tried to build his bridges with the Rao government through the quintessential middleman, Subramanian Swamy. On the crucial no-confidence vote in Parliament in the budget session, Mulayam personally ensured that three of the four SJP members abstained, isolating an embarrassed Chandra Shekhar.

Mulayam was soon rewarded with a berth in the National Integration Council, where the differences between him and Chandra Shekhar once again came to the fore. While Chandra Shekhar took a more conciliatory stand towards the BJP, Mulayam, conscious of his vote-bank among the Muslims, openly called for the dismissal of the Kalyan Singh government in Uttar Pradesh.

The former chief minister has accused the party's central leadership of backstabbing him by refusing to join him in his battle against the BJP in the state. A charge which is denied by former finance minister Yashwant Sinha: "He was given all the freedom he wanted, and every time he asked for any of the leaders, we rushed there." While Sinha's claim is debatable, differences on key issues like mandal remained between the two sides. Mulayam caused further bad blood by packing the state and district organisations of the party with his loyalists, keeping Chandra Shekhar's supporters out.

The split in the SJP is a severe setback for the former Prime Minister who has been trying to reactivate the moribund party as well as bring together other disgruntled opposition leaders like Arun Nehru, Ajit Singh, and Ramakrishna Hegde.

In his home office state of Uttar Pradesh, Chandra Shekhar has been left with virtually no followers. Twenty-three of the 33 party MLAs [members of Legislative Assembly] have also chosen to throw in their lot with the former chief minister who has an iron grip on the organisation and has been in constant touch with the party workers. Of the 25 members in the state's Upper House, 15 have joined Mulayam's newly-formed Samajwadi Party.

Mulayam has been constantly on the move, going from one trouble spot to the other in the state, organising protest rallies. He has not only emerged as the most visible centre of opposition to the BJP, but has also managed to galvanise his party organisation. He was the first to reach Ram Kola in Deoria district to protest against police firing on farmers there.

For Mulayam the strategy is clear. Having emerged as the top opposition leader in the state, he can aim at building upon it by leading an alliance of secular parties, namely the Janata Dal, the left parties and Kanshi Ram's BSP. Mitre Sen Yadav, the CPI state unit secretary, says: "Mulayam and V.P. Singh must come together if they are serious about challenging the BJP."

The left parties, on their part, are playing the honest powerbroker role. They are using their influence to persuade some of the antagonists on both sides to sink their differences and work out an action programme. Rid of the deadwood, Mulayam aims at upping the ante in his battle with the Kalyan Singh government. "I will not rest till I have overthrown the BJP government," he says.

Mulayam has also indicated his mind on joining hands with the Janata Dal. He will share the anti-communal platform with the party at a convention being organised by the left parties in Lucknow later this month. Whatever the ultimate outcome, Mulayam is back in political contention.

Advani Discusses BJP Plenary Plans, Other Matters

93AS0126A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 13 Oct 92 p 8

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Bangalore, October 12 (PTI): The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] will hold its plenary session here from January 21 next in a bid to 'extend its influence in the south', the BJP leader, Mr. L.K. Advani, said yesterday.

He told reporters here the three-day session would be preceded by a two-day meeting of the party's national executive. Over 40,000 delegates were expected to participate in the plenary session, the first ever to be held in the south.

Mr. Advani claimed that the influence of the BJP was manifest in the 1991 election in Karnataka in which the party secured over 30 percent of the votes polled. He termed it as 'a remarkable leap forward.'

Referring to the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute, Mr. Advani said, 'it is not a VHP-BJP issue now, the masses want the temple to be built.'

Stating that he did not want his party to grow by exploiting religious issues, he said Muslims in the country were not opposed to the building of a Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya.

"But some people in the political arena who have developed vested interests in vote banks are opposing the construction of the temple," he said. "The more they oppose it, the more they strengthen the BJP. Some people in the government are appreciating this point."

The BJP was there only to remove the legal obstructions in the construction of the temple, he said.

Mr. Advani criticised the Centre's decision to raise the prices of fertilisers and petroleum products. While the hike in fertiliser prices was a 'cruel blow' to farmers, that for petroleum products would fuel inflation, he said.

The BJP would observe a 'Bharat bandh' on November 3 next to protest against the price hikes, he added.

When a reporter pointed out that the country had already witnessed two bandhs in recent months and a third would affect the common man, and suggested that some other mode of protest be adopted, Mr. Advani said, 'there is nothing wrong in observing peaceful banan, but we will take your suggestion for consideration.'

The BJP leader charged that the Bedthi hydro-electric project in Uttara Kannada district was 'being rushed through by the Bangarappa government without approval of the planning commission.' The project was 'economically not viable, socially harmful and environmentally a bane,' he said. 'Yet it seems that ulterior motives are there in the government of Karnataka to push forward this project. I propose to take up the matter with the Prime Minister and the environment and forest minister, Mr. Kamal Nath.'

Mr. Advani also said he was 'intrigued' at the silence of the Congress president and the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, on the political crisis in Karnataka.

'I don't know why New Delhi is dilly-dallying on the issue, even though several ministers have not been attending the Bangarappa cabinet meetings since two months, and the administration is in a state of paralysis,' Mr. Advani told reporters here.

BJP Said Benefiting From Opposition Disorder in U.P.

93AS0147C Madras THE HINDU in English
25 Oct 92 p 7

[Article by P. K. Roy, in Lucknow: "Disarray Helps the BJP"]

[Text] The Congress(I) is sore with the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in the U.P. [Uttar Pradesh] context. As part of its strategy to remain in power in the crucial Hindi State, the ruling party in U.P. is out to project Mr. V P. Singh and Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav's parties as its alternatives, the Congress(I) leaders lament. And so also remonstrates Mr. Ajit Singh, who held a big rally in Lucknow recently to demonstrate his political clout. The Congress(I) leaders feel that the Chief Minister, Mr. Kalyan Singh kept Mr. V.P. Singh and Mr. Mulayam

Singh Yadav in jail merely to invest them with a halo with an ulterior motive, in exclusion to the Congress(I), which ruled the State since independence save the brief spells of non-Congress regimes.

This view which finds echo among most Congress(I) leaders of U.P. was articulated more succinctly by Mr. Nawal Kishore Sharma on October 20 in Lucknow. He had descended on the State capital to assess the likely impact of the BJP's Bharat bandh call on November 3, in protest against the Centre's policies, and to prepare the organisation to prevent its success. The BJP decision to put Mr. V.P. Singh and Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav in jail is dictated by its desire to project them as alternatives to it and not the Congress(I) and thereby to split the non-BJP votes to its advantage. Mr. Sharma feels that Mr. V.P. Singh and Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav are fallen knights, of little political significance, who are being resurrected by the BJP.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the Congress(I) with its organisational base spread in every block and indeed up to nyaya panchayat level is the most solidly organised political party of Uttar Pradesh. For the North Indian States in particular, U.P. has given the political lead. Perhaps the dynastic rule cared too much for the home State and did not allow leaders of stature to come up. And now that the era is over the State organisation is rudderless in an abject vacuum. The only leader of consequence in the U.P. context, Mr. N.D. Tiwari, was considered a potential claimant to the top slot in the earlier dispensation. For the fourth time he was sent back to Lucknow for the Centre, much against his reservations to confine him to the Chief Minister's office, which held no charm for him.

The two successive defeats, once when Rajiv Gandhi was at the helm of affairs, have induced profound diffidence in the Congress(I), which alone can put up a solid challenge to the BJP, owing to the sweep of its organisational setup. The Central leadership could not find a better choice to the diminutive uncharismatic Mahavir Prasad, who can only raise a laugh or two. The Central Minister to oversee the organisation in U.P. is Mr. Balram Singh Yadav, a former UPCC(I) [Uttar Pradesh Congress(I) Committee] chief. The only role expected of them is to ensure that no rival to the party chief and Prime Minister, Mr. Rao, gathers support in the State. And hence the uproar over the visits of Mr. Arjun Singh and a subdued protest against Mr. N.D. Tiwari's Vikas Yatra. Mr. Arjun Singh had set his eyes when Mr. N. D. Tiwari was abroad. The plea was to revive the Congress(I) in the crucial Hindi heartland.

The non-Congress(I), non-BJP fronts display no better spectacle. Indeed each passing week shows the depletion in their ranks, of what was once a solid Janata Dal, now split into four different entities. The latest to bifurcate is the SJP [Samajwadi Janata Party], showing parting of ways between Mr. Chandra Shekhar and Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav. And to further compound the murky

goings on, seven SJP legislators have crossed over the the Congress(I) in Uttar Pradesh, "a home coming," remarked a floor-crosser. And now the Janata Dal of Mr. Ajit Singh's persuasion is working to induce the Janata Dal (Bommai) for floor-crossing. Mr. Yadunath Singh, State chief of the Janata Dal (Ajit), claimed before presspersons that as many as 22 V.P. Singh supporters were waiting for a signal to switch over. His claim that two of the Mulayam Singh Yadav lieutenants, Mr. Beni Prasad Verma, who was No. 2 in his Cabinet, and the former Union Minister, Mr. Janeshwar Misra too would soon join the Ajit Singh outfit, is not to be dismissed out of hand. These two former Socialists have not taken kindly to the parting of ways with Mr. Chandra Shekhar.

A big disappointment has come the way of the Left parties, seeking to bring Mr. V.P. Singh and Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, on a common platform against the BJP on communalism issue. It was considered that a formidable combination would emerge to tackle the Hindutwa wave and the BJP, which came to power on the Ayodhya issue. The platform was the anti-communal convention in Lucknow on October 22, where both were invited. The Left party leaders had consulted the National Front leaders about the proposed rally. But Mr. V.P. Singh chose to stay away. For that matter even the party chief, Mr. S.R. Bommai, was not present much to the chagrin of the Left leaders, Mr. Harkishan Singh Surjeet in particular.

Ego is the main problem that keeps Mr. V.P. Singh, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, Mr. Ajit Singh and Mr. Chandra Shekhar apart. It was different so long as they had not enjoyed the august office. To Mr. Ajit Singh, the others are welcome to join his outfit. His State unit chief, Mr. Yadunath Singh would concede Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav at the most the State chief's office. Similarly, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav is on record that the Janata Dal people may join his outfit, but he is not going to anybody to merge his Samajwadi Party. Mr. V.P. Singh although in two minds in view of the ground reality in U.P., cannot brush aside strong reservations of his lieutenants, who all are set against Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav.

The BJP has been at the receiving end from the other parties on the Ayodhya issue. That is partly by choice. That it is the sole champion of the Hindutwa cause and temple issue is something which paid it dividends and would continue to do so. Until the issue is resolved amicably, which is a far cry, the Sangh Parivar, with its over a hundred allied bodies, can at will develop a stage of confrontation over Ayodhya with dire prognosis that would reassert its position in the eyes of the majority community. It amounts to fitting Rama against its detractors. The prolonging of the dispute, therefore, causes little concern to it. So long as the Ayodhya issue is alive and the Opposition is kept on ruminating over its protracted gameplan the other pressing issues would appear irrelevant. Only Mr. N D. Tiwari has sought to confront it on the issue of low priority on development. The others have not taken the cue.

Paper Reports Second Round of Ayodhya Talks

93AS0124A Madras THE HINDU in English
11 Oct 92 p 1

[Quotation marks, italicized, boldface words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, October 16. The attempt at resolving the Ayodhya conflict through an examination of archaeological and historical evidence is expected to move towards a denouement on October 29, after which the two parties to the dispute will meet for a third round of discussions at a date to be announced by the Government later.

The atmosphere at the second round of the Ayodhya talks here today was described as 'cordial' by Mr. P.R. Kumaramangalam, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, nominated by the Prime Minister to coordinate the discussions. Mr. Subodh Kant Sahay, former Minister of State for Home, said the discussions were proceeding 'in the right direction,' while Mr. Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] Chief Minister of Rajasthan, had no comment to make. He said he had nothing to say either on behalf of the BJP,—“I am not here as a party representative,”—or what attitude the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP] would take.

Mr. S.B. Chavan, Home Minister, who had convened the first meeting of the resumed dialogue on October 3, was not present today. The Prime Minister hosted a dinner to the participants in the discussions.

It appears that most of the time was spent on details of the various archaeological and historical arguments advanced for and against the theory that a Hindu temple had been demolished at the disputed spot and the proposition that the site had been venerated as the janmasthan of Ram. The experts nominated by the All-India Babri Masjid Action Committee [AIBMAC] refuted the arguments advanced by the VHP on the basis of 'new archaeological findings' at Ayodhya.

VHP warning

Mr. Jawed Habib of the AIBMAC said the proceedings were moving towards 'a logical end.' However, Mr. Ashok Singhal of the VHP struck a discordant note, warning that the time given for resolving the conflict was running out and would come to an end on October 26, after which "we will be bound by the decision of the Dharam Sansad scheduled to take place on October 30 and 31." He also told newsmen during a tea-break that "the situation was explosive."

At the end of over four hours of discussions between the VHP and the AIBMAC and independent experts nominated by the two groups, it was decided unanimously that written opinions on the evidence submitted by the two groups till today be submitted to the Government by October 23. The two parties would be free to submit any fresh evidence of a historical or archaeological nature till October 23.

The Government agreed to make available copies of these rejoinders and fresh evidence to 'the opposite parties' by October 24. It would also make arrangements for experts on the two sides to examine and study the primary evidence and other materials from the B.B. Lal Ayodhya excavations at the Purana Qila office of the Archaeological Survey of India [ASI] on October 23.

Both the parties agreed to submit by October 29 their final reports on this matter including reports on the rejoinders of the opposite party. After this process was completed the Government would announce a date for the third round of discussions.

In response to the question by newsmen, Mr. Kuma-ramangalam made it clear that both the parties had agreed to meet again and that the dialogue would go on.

Theory refuted

While experts from the VHP side were categorical that the new archaeological findings had established the existence of a 11-12th century temple at the disputed site, Prof. D.N. Jha, Prof. R.S. Sharma, Prof. Suraj Bhan and Prof. Athar Ali, in a document submitted today refuted this theory.

Talking to newsmen, Prof. Jha described the excavations as a "PWD [Public Works Department] kind of digging" and the discoveries, he said, could only be described as chance finds. Under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules of 1969, the site should have immediately been taken over by the ASI and it should have submitted a report to the Government. The antiquity of the finds would have to be established scientifically, keeping in mind the nefarious trade in antiques.

Prof. Jha alleged that Prof. B.B. Lal had been constantly shifting his stand on his Ayodhya excavations. As late as this year he had introduced a paragraph in his report on the findings given at a seminar organised by the Indian Council of Historical Research in 1989—an "after thought" had been added three full years later. Prof. K.V. Sounderrajan, a co-director of the Ayodhya project, clearly stated that the Ayodhya mound had disclosed no signs of habitation between the 11th and 15th centuries A.D.

He also said that at the City Palace Museum of Jaipur, there were eight maps of Ayodhya belonging to the 18th century. Seven of these shown by the catalogue as religious maps made no mention of a janmasthan at Ayodhya. Only one, cited by the VHP, did mention a janmasthan. He felt that the omissions in the 'religious maps' should point to the fact that the Ram cult was not ascendant at the time.

Some leaders of the VHP today claimed that the ASI has agreed to send a team to Ayodhya to study the new evidence. Dr. S.P. Gupta, nominated by the VHP as an expert, said some of the findings were *in situ* and therefore could not be doubted.

Round-table conference

A point made forcefully by Professors Jha and Athar Ali was that the Ayodhya controversy should not be allowed to make a mockery of "our national heritage" which was too important an issue to be left to the VHP and the AIBMAC. Instead of bilateral talks, there should be a round table conference of intellectuals, academicians, leaders of various sections and political parties. This forum, rather than the VHP and the AIBMAC, should take a decision.

It was clear the academic debate could go on and serious issues raised by various interpretations of history and archaeology could not be resolved in a matter of hours through discussions of this nature.

Survey Reveals Divided Attitudes Regarding Ayodhya

93AS0147G *Bombay TIMES OF INDIA in English*
26 Oct 92 p 11

[Survey by TIMES OF INDIA Correspondents: "Ayodhya: Oh God, Not Again!"]

[Text] Bombay, Oct. 25. For many Indians, the mandir-masjid dispute in Ayodhya is like watching the Doordarshan news bulletin. At the end of the day, as the same characters parade themselves and the plot shows no signs of changing, the onlookers are left with a feeling of acute *deja vu*.

With yet another deadline set by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad expiring on Diwali, the country appears to have resigned itself to one more self-defeating period of trishul-rattling.

It is revealing that, even as a section of the political leadership is convinced that this is the most urgent issue confronting the nation, the general public feeling, outside that of die-hard Rambhakts, is one of either deepening cynicism or of supreme indifference.

Equally revealing is that even as politicians and religious leaders attempt to posit the issue in black and white terms, the masses believe that there is an available middle ground that can provide a rational solution.

The underlying cynicism is best captured in the words of a highly-placed government official in New Delhi who prefers to remain anonymous, "What is the use of discussing this issue? The people who are involved in the controversy, whether Hindu or Muslim, have completely closed minds. They cannot even listen to each other properly, let alone come to an understanding."

Indeed, there is a near-complete unanimity that the Ayodhya imbroglio has been totally politicised by raking it up at periodic intervals. Says Mr. Shailesh Mehta, a bank employee in Baroda, "Hindu and Muslim leaders feel that by raising this issue, they can demonstrate to their followers that they alone can 'protect' the interests

of their communities. Without a live issue like Ayodhya, they may be consigned to oblivion."

Most people, like Archana Chaudhary, a housewife in Bhopal, feel that a firm deadline to resolve this issue must be set. There are a few though, like Dr. Kameshwar Prasad of Patna university, who blame historians and archaeologists for having unnecessarily complicate the issue.

"Religion is a matter of faith which cannot be easily challenged or proved. It would be better that further excavations are conducted at the site to prove conclusively whether there was a pre-Islamic religious structure there," he says.

But while the controversy festers, politicians are seen to be playing their own games. In this political one-upmanship, it is the common man who has lost out, feels Mr. L. Ganeshan, managing director of Engine Valves Ltd., Madras.

Sultan Rahaman, a Calcutta-based businessman whose ancestral house is in Allahabad, says that the Ayodhya dispute has disturbed the peace in his hometown. "Whenever there is an agitation, my old parents become panicky lest there is an outbreak of communal violence in the town," he laments.

The importance given to a disputed site of worship is seen to reflect lop-sided priorities. Says Dr. Janaki Sinha, director of the Centre for Women's Studies in Bihar, "The average Indian is not bothered at all whether a temple is built or not in Ayodhya. They are more concerned about the developmental activities in the country. By raising this issue again and again, our politicians have only pushed the progress of this country thousands of years back."

This open hostility towards the political class manifests itself in responses to whether religious leaders should enter the political domain. As Mr. Venkateshwara Rao, a student in Vishakapatnam puts it, "Sadhus should stick to religion. Once they dabble in politics, they cannot be called holymen any more."

Mr. K.V. Sastri, a retired teacher, recalls that the father of Sant Dyaneshwar, in Maharashtra, was ostracised because he had returned to worldly affairs after a spell as a sadhu.

Adds Mr. Dilhas Sanghavi, an Ahmedabad-based businessman, "Religious leaders, whether they be sadhus or mullahs, can express their opinion, but taking to the streets on an issue like this is against all religious tenets."

But this opinion is not universally shared. Gour Chandra Seal, a retired government employee in Calcutta, feels that there is no harm in sadhus taking active part in politics. His argument is, "Buddhist monks are known to have participated in politics in Vietnam, Myanmar and Ceylon. They even underwent self-immolation for a

political cause. So why can't our sadhus also be politically involved if they feel strongly about the issue?" he asks.

Mr. K.C. John, a veteran journalist in Trivandrum, feels that any criticism of the role of sadhus in politics is riddled with double-standards. "When the godman Chandraswami is the spiritual guru of 'secular' prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, then what is wrong in sadhus involving themselves with the Ayodhya dispute?" he asks.

Sadhus should provide a guiding hand to politicians and keep them on the right track, feels Mr. K. Ramakrishnan, a chartered accountant in Madras. But what is the 'right track'?

One line is that of staunch BJP-VHP [Bharatiya Janata Party-Vishwa Hindu Parishad] supporters, like a middle-class gentleman in the Bengali market in the capital who affirms, "The Babri masjid is a symbol of Muslim tyranny and injustice. It has to be demolished to restore the image of the nation."

But very few others share this opinion. For example, Aurobindo Ghosh, general secretary of the People's Rights Organisation, a Delhi-based human rights group, says that his organisation's view is that even if there were archaeological evidence that a temple existed at the site, the mosque should not be destroyed. "Religion cannot be used to humiliate communities," he feels.

This view may be rooted in firm ideological predilections. But even those who have no intellectual pretensions appear willing to take a more humane, practical view. Like a group of farmers in Kurukshetra, who claim, "Ram is a god who is present everywhere. His temple can be built anywhere."

This broad-minded approach is reflected in the growing belief that the best solution is to convert the disputed site into a national monument, or have a temple built adjoining the mosque. "Converting the site into a national monument will be the best way to promote communal harmony," opines Dr. Dawoodbhai Kherada in communally-divided Ahmedabad.

But while the national monument concept is seen to be a good idea, many think it to be unrealistic in present circumstances. "None of the parties are willing to make the necessary sacrifices," fears Dr. J.S. Bandukwala, an academician in Baroda.

Mr. Dayanand Gulati, a retired engineer in Haryana, is more optimistic. "Even if the national monument decision is resented by some, in the longrun it will be commended by all," he hopes.

(Written by) Rajdeep Sardesai; with reports from Sudhin Dey, (Calcutta), V. R. Mani (Trivandrum), Pushpa Iyengar (Madras), Sudhir Kalia (Chandigarh), Tabish Khair (New Delhi), Pranava Chaudhary (Patna), C. Lokeshwara Rao (Hyderabad), Anil Sharma (Bhopal), Rajiv Wagh (Bombay), Manas Das Gupta (Baroda),

Umesh Ambegaonkar (Ahmedabad) and Rafat Nayeem Quadri (Surat).

Paper Interviews Haryana Chief Minister
93AS0130A Madras THE HINDU in English
7 Oct 92 p 1

[Boldface words as published]

[Text] Chandigarh, October 6: The Haryana Government is not averse to a final agreement being reached with Punjab in respect of Chandigarh and other pending matters even if the arrangement was arrived outside the Rajiv-Longowal accord. The Haryana Government's flexibility on the contentious issue follows the statement made by Punjab Chief Minister, Mr. Beant Singh, sometime ago that the Rajiv-Longowal Accord was inadequate and its loopholes needed to be rectified. He too had said a final solution could be reached outside the accord, though later attempts were made to cover it up.

Talking to THE HINDU here, the Haryana Chief Minister, Mr. Bhajan Lal, said that if Chandigarh was to be transferred to Punjab, Abhoar and Fazilka must be handed over to Haryana. However, significantly, he said that his Government "is interested in a final solution to the pending problems even if it amounted to making a few adjustments. We have to give some to take some and the Punjab Government has to do the same in the national interest."

Mr. Bhajan Lal said he had been in continuous touch with Mr. Beant Singh and both of them were in favour of an amicable solution to the problem. Haryana should get what was due to it. There was no question of any dispute with Punjab if things were worked out properly and in mutual interest.

Referring to the SYL canal, he said that 95 percent of the work had been completed and he was confident that Haryana would get its share of water after the completion of the remaining work.

The Chief Minister said his Government was now reviewing all its schemes and he had called for full reports from various departments to see for himself the extent to which targets have been realised.

Dissident activity: Asked how he viewed the growing dissident activity in the State, Mr. Bhajan Lal said the political situation was totally under control. There were only four persons, one MLA [member of Legislative Assembly] and three MPs [members of Parliament], in the Congress who had been indulging in dissident activities for the past several months and there had been no addition to their camp. The Congress(I) High Command was aware of their activities.

Mr. Bhajan Lal hinted that he might drop the dissidents from his Council of Ministers during the next Cabinet reshuffle which he planned before Deepavali. "I will drop some Ministers and induct some others," he said.

Asked what he would do if the High Command decided to accommodate him at the Centre, he said he could even be asked to go and sit at home.

Threat from Opposition: The Chief Minister said there was no threat to his Government from the Opposition in the State. In a democracy, it was always a game of numbers. If the Government were to run by threats, then gangsters, hoodlums and terrorists would be in power. However, in a democracy this was not the case and one had to go by numbers and the Opposition had very few MLAs with them. Even Mr. Devi Lal had not been able to find back his feet in the State.

Mr. Bhajan Lal was all praise for the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, who, he said, "had given a new direction to the country's economic policy. He is very able and has greatly contributed in making India's image abroad better."

The Prime Minister would be addressing a huge public meeting on the 26th anniversary of the formation of Haryana on November 1 at Yamunanagar. Mr. Rao would also lay the foundation of a 840 MW thermal power station.

Sadhavi Rithambara Interviewed on Religion, Politics

93AS0116G THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA in English 16 Oct 92 pp 18-19

[Interview with Sadhavi Rithambara, by S. Balakrishnan, in Bombay, date not given: "Ensure That Your Knives Taste Blood"]

[Text] The venue is a high school ground in suburban Bombay. The audience principally consists of women, who are either activists or sympathisers of the Durga Vahini. The Vahini members demonstrate, with precision, their skills in yoga, judo, karate and other self-defence techniques. After the demonstrations, they queue up before the firebrand Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader, Sadhavi Rithambara, who distributes *katars* or knives in black sheaths.

In her hour-long, rapid-fire speech, she exhorts the Vahini members not to fail their weapons. "If you are required to draw them out, ensure that your *katars* taste blood," she appeals, and the audience bursts into frenzied applause. This is the nth meeting addressed by the Sadhavi. She criss-crosses the country and under the aegis of Vishwa Hindu Parishad and its front organisations, addresses dozens of meetings to mobilise people towards the construction of the Ram Janam Bhoomi temple at Qyodhya.

Sadhavi Rithambara, who at the age of 14 was inspired by Yugpurush Swami Parmanand of Haridwar to take to *sanyas*, was recently served a summons by the Bombay High Court in connection with an election petition case. While in Bombay, she spoke to the WEEKLY on a number of controversial issues.

Q: The Bombay High Court has served a summons on you in connection with an election partition. You are alleged to have appealed to the voters to vote in favour of a Hindu rashtra so that the saffron flag can be hoisted on the Red Fort. Do you regret your statements?

A: In this country, it is a crime to speak of national unity. I am only articulating the anguish and deeply felt feelings of 70 crore Hindus of this country. I speak the truth, but then truth is bitter and some people find it difficult to swallow. If the Shahi Imam talks of converting India into Kashmir, nobody does anything to him. But, when I speak of a united India consisting of self-respecting citizens, I am pulled up. But this has been a 40-year tradition in our country. I do not blame the judges because they are not free persons. They have mortgaged their conscience to the powers that be.

Q: The Centre has threatened to sack the Kalyan Singh government in Uttar Pradesh if it proceeds with the construction of the temple at Ayodhya. What is your reaction?

A: The temple issue is not one confined to UP [Uttar Pradesh] alone. It is a national issue and if the UP government is sacked, the repercussions will be felt at the Centre. Hindus all over the country are bound to react. Whether the Bharatiya Janata Party benefits from these developments or not is a different matter. But no political party which opposes the temple can survive. The Central government realises this.

Q: So much scorn is being poured on the Muslims in the context of the Ram Janam Bhoomi controversy, but nobody is persuading them to voluntarily relinquish their claim to the temple site. Why is the path of persuasion not being followed?

A: I don't know how you are saying that. So many times negotiations have been held with the Muslim leaders. But every time it is the same story. The Muslims want us to build a temple elsewhere. Our point is that the land, which we are convinced is the Ram Janam Bhoomi, is important to us and not the structure. For them only the structure is important and this can be shifted. Nobody has insulted the Muslims. In fact it is the so-called leaders of the Muslims who are preventing the community from joining the mainstream. When the Shahi Imam asks, where is the national mainstream, certainly he is being provocative.

Q: Muslim leaders might be making mistakes, but why do you hate the mass of Muslims?

A: I do not hate them. After all, they were originally Hindus. I am not against anybody who regards Hindustan as his or her motherland and is totally committed to it.

Q: Even if the Ayodhya issue is solved somehow, you will be taking up the question of temple construction at Mathura and Kashi. When will all this end?

A: Hundreds of temples were razed to the ground by the Moghul rulers and mosques were built in their place. We are not asking for the reconstruction of the temples at all the sites. We want the temples to be rebuilt only at Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura. If the Muslim community respects the sentiments of 70 crore Hindus, displays its magnanimity and lets us build the temple at the three places, then it will open a new chapter in Hindu-Muslim relations. If they do not cooperate, then we are ready for a long struggle. We are willing to pay any price for that.

Q: Do you think that in the context of growing poverty and unemployment, it is right to take up the temple issue?

A: Poverty and unemployment are not there because we are fighting for the temple. These problems are there because the government is not able to tackle them for the past several years. But, *roti* is not everything. If there is a war with Pakistan tomorrow, shall we not fight because *roti* is more important? The temple construction is necessary for our national resurgence. It will bring about national unity and give a sense of self-respect and spiritually uplift the people. Some people have talked of building a hospital at Ram Janam Bhoomi. I want to ask them, is there a shortage of land in India that they want a hospital only at that spot?

Q: You make sarcastic references to Mahatma Gandhi in your speeches. Do you hate him?

A: I respect him for his commitment to *ahimsa* and for his *sadhana*. But, I also recognise the fact that he committed blunders because of which we are suffering now. Small people commit small mistakes and big ones commit big mistakes. The so-called Mahatma could have prevented the partition of India, but he did not do that. Even when the partition was effected, logically, all Muslims should have been asked to go to Pakistan. He prevented that. Not only that, he ensured that India pay Rs. 55 crore to Pakistan. He ruined India. I do not hate him as an individual, but I hate his actions. He wanted to take credit for the 'Hindi-Muslim unity' but he did not succeed. He was a failure because the Muslims never respected him.

Q: Does this mean that you justify Nathuram Godse's assassination of Gandhi?

A: I can't say. I do not know what his (Godse's) compulsions were and in what frame of mind he was when he pulled the trigger.

Q: Do you favour violence?

A: No.

Q: Then why do you distribute knives?

A: Knives are symbols of our religion. See our idols of Shakti. They all carry weapons. They all carry weapons. These are meant for self-defence. They provide us with inspiration. On the one hand, one should have the Gita and on the other, the weapon.

Q: Don't these weapon distributing programmes create fears in the minds of other communities?

A: If a person does *kasrat* (physical exercise) in his house, why should his neighbour get afraid. It will be foolish for the neighbour to think that he is going to be attacked.

Q: Other sanyasins connected with the Ram Janam Bhoomi have become Members of Parliament. Do you have any plan of entering politics?

A: No. In fact, I will never contest any election in my life.

Q: Then, what is your ambition?

A: I am only interested in the spiritual resurgence of my country. This is a positive goal. I will be happy if even a fraction of my efforts bear fruit.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Said Under Pressure

93AS0147D Madras THE HINDU in English
25 Oct 92 p 7

[Article by V. T. Joshi, in Bhopal: "Patwa Under Pressure"]

[Text] The Congress culture seems to have permeated the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] also as evidenced by the signature campaign for a change of leadership in MP [Member of Parliament].

There was a time, not long ago, when Congressmen proudly claimed that they were born to rule and they alone knew the tricks of the trade. The Opposition parties derisively called it Congress "boastocracy." With the loss of its monopoly of power the boot is now on the other leg. The ruling BJP seems well set to learn the tricks of the trade by emulating the Congress culture which, until recently, it despised heartily. Its massive two-thirds majority in the State Legislature, which put it in power for the first time on its own in Madhya Pradesh, is a heady wine that makes it immune to external threat and, ironically enough, helps to provide itself with its own internal factional opposition—in the grand old style of the Congress, the mother of most political parties in the country.

Its latest manifestation in the same style and political culture is the alleged signature campaign for change of leadership of the BJP Legislature Party, a euphemism for removal of Mr. Patwa. Alarmed at the rupture in the party's long cherished disciplinarian-cum-authoritarian exterior, the BJP leaders have belatedly admitted it, some grudgingly and others denying it half heartedly while still others claiming that it has been nipped in the bud.

The precise number of the signatories can only be guessed from the whispers in different circles. According to reliable sources, the initial move by a group of youthful legislators led by a party MP attracted the "first instalment" of 72 signatures which allegedly rose steadily to a total of 130—that is 20 more than half the

strength of the 220-member Legislature Party. The implication was quite disturbing for the ruling faction, threatened with clear loss of confidence within the party. The signatories were said to comprise legislators from the partly-alienated Chattisgarh regions besides the bulk of Harijans and Adivasis. They demanded action by the central leadership against the sins of omission and commission of the Ministry or the freedom to act "on their own" to change the leader.

The grounds on which a change is demanded have an all too familiar ring about them—just as in most Congress-ruled States as always. The much maligned "style of functioning" of the Chief Minister, maladministration and inefficient governance, lack of development, the predominance of the liquor and lottery lobbies giving rise to pervasive corruption and turning the State into a den of gamblers and addicts, and other grounds of individual dissatisfaction. The trump is however the fear of electoral gods: The party will lose heavily in the next elections just about two years away and will not be returned to power.

The response of the Patwa group is to mount a counter campaign to consolidate itself and wean away from the Opposite camp the fence sitters of whom there is usually no dearth in all such moves in most political parties.

The immediate result of the tug of war may be a prolonged stalemate. But the more disturbing aspect is that the rot has set in in a party that could justifiably claim to be different, to be a paragon of political virtues. And boasted of it unabashedly, and claimed that it had set out to provide a model State Government for the rest of the country.

It is not without significance that Mr. Patwa, who never tired of saying in all his public speeches day in and day out in the first two years of this regime that his party would usher in a new political ethos and change the Congress culture, has virtually stopped talking about it in the past few months.

All this has come as a welcome ammunition for the dissident camp virtually led by his arch rival from the same opium-rich district of Mandsaur and former Chief Minister, Mr. V.K. Saklecha, who has old scores to settle.

Last month's Garoth incident created a piquant, stormy situation for the Minister, as it involved unexpectedly strong police action and atrocities on the people ostensibly for demanding a new district of their own in the wake of the Government's decision to create 16 new districts, but, also allegedly because of group rivalries in the ruling party on the one hand and the complicity of a drug (smack)-peddling gang, on the other.

While the Congress(I) launched a virulent campaign on the issue, accusing the Patwa regime of betraying "fascist tendencies" and demanding a judicial inquiry, Mr. Saklecha went to the place and came up with a damning

report of the police brutalities after investigating the gory details and the hardships of the people there.

Contrary to his earlier tough stand, the Chief Minister felt constrained to announce a judicial inquiry obviously at the behest of the central leaders.

The key figures involved in the MP scene are Mr. Kusha Bhau Thakare, the man who has nursed and nurtured the Jan Sangh-BJP party in Madhya Pradesh for the past four decades with singular devotion, Mrs. Vijayaraje Scindia intimately associated with it as a kind of God-mother ever since she left the Congress in the late Sixties. Though partly sharing the disillusionment with the present state of affairs, both are reported to be keen on the continuance of the status quo even if only to avoid the Congress(I) culture of changing horses midstream.

Mr. Patwa himself has said more than once that it would not take him more than a minute to step down if "somebody" just whispers in his ears to do so. But that "somebody" is yet to materialise and it may not be soon if at all.

In an interview he fully shared the dismay over the dismal turn of events in the party but dismissed the upheavals as the "mythical churning of the ocean to produce the nectar after throwing out the poison."

According to well informed sources, the central leaders of the party are however, anxious about the performance of the BJP Ministry and the steady erosion of its base in Madhya Pradesh, since it is the only State where it has well built strongholds among different strata of people especially agriculturists, tribals and traders besides large sections of middle classes—unlike in other BJP ruled States where it is still regarded as no more than a mere "traders" party!

Frontier With China Slated for Opening to Tourism

93AS0116C *Bombay TIMES OF INDIA in English*
19 Oct 92 p 14

[Article by Amulya Ganguli: "Beyond the Inner Line: Prospects of Opening Up Arunachal"]

[Text] Itanagar: In contrast to other states in the north-east, where separatism and xenophobia are much in evidence, Arunachal Pradesh is like an oasis of peace. Strikes and agitations are unknown, and life flows in an even tenor which must be the envy of the administrators, residents and tourists of the turbulent neighbouring areas. What is more, 30 years after the Chinese invasion when names like Tawang and Bomdila suddenly burst on the national consciousness, Arunachal can very well serve as a model of national integration despite the large number of ethnic groups which constitute its population.

There is none of the aggressive parochialism which characterises the attitude of the locals elsewhere in the north-east towards visitors, although the people of Arunachal Pradesh are no less conscious of their distinctive identity and resent being mistaken for Nepalis in other parts of India. It has been suggested, of course, that the very diversity of the 26 major tribal groups speaking more than 100 dialects and spread at the rate of ten people per sq km., not to mention the harshness of nature, has ensured an easy acquiescence in the order of the day. As Verrier Elwin pointed out, for centuries the real ruler of the tribal people... has been the environment; it has shaped their bodies, directed their art, forced Babel on their tongues. But other explanations are also offered, the major one being the benign influence of Buddhism and the worship of the sun god, Donyi-Polo, and the moon god, Abo-Tani, denoting an antiquity lost in the mists of time.

Pristine Form

Arunachal is innocent of all the major Indian religions. Ram is as much as a stranger here as Jesus, Mohammed and Guru Nanak—a fact which those who want to put India into the strait-jacket of one dominant culture might ponder. The reason why Arunachal has been able to retain its pristine religious form is the strict enforcement of the inner line regulation of 1873, originally introduced for the easternmost areas of Bengal which then included Assam and NEFA. Nehru appreciated the value of such a distinctive ethos which is why he thought that even the singing of Gandhi's favourite song, *Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram*, was totally inappropriate for NEFA [Northeast Frontier Agency].

One effect of this exclusiveness was that Christian missionaries were denied access to Arunachal unlike the other north-eastern states, with the result that the feeling now is that the state has been spared the anti-Indian influence of their activities. It is a view which is echoed by almost everyone down from the governor, Mr. Surendranath Dwivedy, nor is this anything new, for Elwin

noted as early as in the fifties that it has also been found in practice that the effect of some of the foreign missions on the tribes of eastern India has been to create a separatist mentality, a doctrine that insists that Christians should keep themselves apart from non-Christians results in an essentially separatist, xenophobic psychology. Gopinath Bordoloi also said: "It is not known to you that the rule of the British government and the activities of the foreign missions always went together. During their rule, the rulers and the officers developed in the mind of the people (in tribal areas) a sense of separatism and isolation and gave them assurances that at the end of the war, they will be independent states managing their affairs in their own way."

Spectre Recedes

But the government now wants these restrictions to be relaxed. The reason may not be unrelated to the improvement in Sino-Indian relations which has made the spectre of war recede well into the background. The days when China described Arunachal as basically an Indian-occupied area of Chinese territory lying between the traditionally customary line and the illegal McMahon Line are over. Memories of that traumatic experience remain. However, although it is also acknowledged that the Chinese incursion was a blessing in disguise for it led to an all-round improvement in roads and communications, the winding road from Tawang to Sela and then down to Bomdila is dotted with memorials to fallen heroes, one of whom, Jaswant Singh, has had a temple built in his honour.

It is patent enough that the huge Army presence (which is one of the abiding impressions of Arunachal apart, of course, from the landscape) has had a two-fold impact. The negative aspect is the deforestation in the higher reaches so that the army can have an unobstructed view of the Chinese border. Combined with the customary felling of trees by tribals for use as firewood, the process has compounded the problem of landslides in a notoriously unstable geological area where signs about sinking roads are not uncommon.

Nothing is more heartening, however, than the absence of tension between the security forces and the local people. Given the size of the Army presence and the duration of its stay, instances of molestation and high-handed behavior are remarkably few. Instead, the Army is seen as a saviour in times of natural disasters which are not infrequent. In the towns the regular turnover of officers and men has meant that the local businesses have thrived despite the absence of tourists. Even a marginal reduction in the Army's presence will mean that the shopkeepers and other traders will have to turn to other sources of patronage in a poor state.

Freer Flow

The government apparently hopes the tourists will fill the breach. Even otherwise, as the governor says, why should people from other states need permits to visit this

part of the country? Hence, his suggestion for improving air and train services so that there can be a freer flow. In view of the woeful lack of infrastructure, however, in the realm of decent accommodation, taxi services and eating houses, the current official emphasis is on developing adventure tourism where the visitors will not mind roughing it out.

The full implications, however, of opening up the state after its long isolation do not seem to have been adequately considered. It will be futile to deny that the current tranquility is partly the result of the fact that the people of Arunachal have been left to themselves, with the Army acting as a benevolent guardian. The result has been that the affluent classes comprising politicians, officials and feudal chiefs have managed to do well for themselves in the absence of sufficient competition while the poor, like the poor everywhere, have been left to endure their fate in silence.

The influx of outsiders familiar with the wicked ways of the world is bound to give rise to the kind of tension which is already evident from the disgruntlement of the educated unemployed (a number of whom have studied in Delhi) with the plains people working in the state. Among traders, the *benami* entry of Marwaris as the main beneficiaries of the trade licenses secured by locals is a major talking point. The belief, is that, in ten years time, as the literacy rate rises beyond the current 25 percent, Arunachal will no longer be as quiescent as now. The strategy for a closer relationship, therefore, will have to be evolved with considerable care, avoiding the mistakes of too assertive a presence or pouring in too much money as elsewhere in the north-east.

Trade Protocol With CIS Nations Reported

93AS0140A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA*
in English 8 Oct 92 p 15

[Text] New Delhi, October 7 (PTI)—Trade between India and the erstwhile U.S.S.R. can now take place in free convertible currency, counter-trade, barter trade or any other recognised form of business co-operation internationally and under the prescribed clearing mechanism, if any.

This is in accordance with the agreement/protocol on economic co-operation already concluded between the republics of the erstwhile U.S.S.R. and India.

Import and export transactions by all concerned including 100 percent export-oriented units (EOU's)/ export processing zones/free trade zone (FTZ) units can be transacted in free convertible currency counter-trade or through third countries of any item not covered under the negative list of imports or exports of the export and import policy (1992-97).

This is irrespective of the fact whether such items are specifically included or not in the trade protocol or trade agreement between the respective countries. However, in respect of counter-trade such transactions will have to be

counter-balanced through the mechanism of an escrow account subject to such terms and conditions as may be prescribed by the RBI [Reserve Bank of India], an official release here said.

Foreign Investment Policy Analyzed, Compared

93AS0123A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
5 Oct 92 p 1

[Boldface words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, October 4: The Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. K. Matsuura's remark that India should provide a legal framework for its economic policy changes introduced to attract foreign investment needs close examination. The Japanese feared that policy changes effected through notifications could be similarly changed by a succeeding Government, issuing new notifications.

The demand for legal backing was made by the Japanese delegation headed by Mr. Matsuura at a recent meeting of Indo-Japanese trade talks. The Indian side was led by the Commerce Secretary, Mr. A.V. Ganesan.

Available information suggests that compared to other newly industrialising countries, the foreign investment regulatory framework in India deserves to be streamlined even more clearly, leave alone the legislative backing demanded by the Japanese.

China, which has been attracting billions of dollars in foreign investment annually, insists that a foreign investor must invest a minimum of 25 percent with no upper limit. While preferential treatment is accorded to investors setting up units in government preferred sectors, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade is the sole authority dealing with foreign investment.

In Indonesia the treatment to foreign ownership was comparatively tighter than in China. But as for areas it has a negative list of 11 business sectors where foreign investment was prohibited. Of these four are in the services sector and seven in manufacturing. But on approval of foreign investment, Indonesia's Investment Coordinating Board is the sole institution for managing foreign investment applications and providing licences/facilities.

Different norms: Malaysia has different norms for foreign ownership ranging from 100 percent foreign ownership if the company exported 80 percent or more of its products irrespective of whether it was produced domestically to 51 percent ownership in high technology or priority products for domestic markets. The Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA) publishes the list of products and activities eligible for investment incentives. MIDA also functions as the Centre On Investment. As a result, the number of agencies and departments that investors have to approach and time taken to get relevant approvals is reduced.

Philippines generally allows foreign equity up to 40 percent but permits 100 percent equity in pioneer activity or exporting at least 70 percent of the total production. As for the specific areas, the Philippines Government has introduced a legislation providing for a negative list that covers ownership of land, mass media, public utilities, financial systems and natural resource-based industries. But foreign investment proposals are cleared by one authority the Board of Investment (BOI).

No restriction: Singapore has no restriction on foreign equity participation except in certain service sectors. Investment is restricted in banking, newspapers and real estate. But the Economic Development Board is solely responsible for investment approvals, both domestic and foreign.

South Korea is a classic case where no restrictions are placed on foreign equity but it has a negative list specifying areas where foreign investment is not allowed. In South Korea no approvals are required for foreign investment.

Taiwan also has no restriction on the size of foreign equity. But it has a list of favoured areas for foreign investment. As for approval, all foreign nationals have to obtain a Foreign Investment Approval (FIA) from the single authority, namely the Investment Commission of the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

In Thailand, among other things, 100 percent foreign equity is allowed where 100 percent of the production is exported. Majority foreign ownership is also allowed where more than 50 percent of the production is exported. In other cases, domestic ownership in the equity ranged between 51 percent and 60 percent. Thailand also maintains a list of activities for promotion of foreign investment. But foreign investment proposals are dealt with and cleared by only one body—the Board of Investment.

In Mexico, foreign equity up to 40 percent is normally allowed. But 100 percent ownership is also allowed under certain conditions like location of the unit, balancing of foreign exchange transactions over a three-year period and meeting environmental standards. It has a list of areas for foreign investment. Mexico also has a single approval authority, its Ministry of Trade and Industrial Development which handles all matters relating to foreign investment.

Plethora of agencies: In contrast, India has a plethora of agencies dealing with foreign investment. Foreign investors depending on different criteria have to go to the RBI [Reserve Bank of India], the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB), the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Investment (CCFI) and the recently set up Empowered Committee headed by the Finance Minister himself. On top of all this the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs also occasionally examines the proposal if it is politically hot. Such a multi-layered system does not project a good image of India in attracting foreign direct investment.

The constitution of the Empowered Committee a few days ago makes a comedy of India's efforts. For instance, its members include besides the Finance Minister, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Cabinet Secretary, Industry Secretary, Finance Secretary and the Minister or representative of the ministry concerned whose project was being considered. It has powers to clear investment proposals up to a maximum of Rs. 300 crores.

The Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) was set up in August 1991 with the objective of getting big players. Instead of seeking out investment from abroad, it got rooted in India and began to clear projects with investment as low as Rs. 20 lakhs. The FIPB is headed by the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Finance Secretary, Industry Secretary, Commerce Secretary and the Administrative Secretary concerned.

The FIPB, for lack of political teeth, began to refer its approvals to the specially constituted Cabinet Committee on Foreign Investment headed by the Prime Minister with the Finance Minister and Commerce Minister as its members. Thus, there will be two political bodies, CCFI and the Empowered Committee, besides the others mentioned above. Interestingly, the otherwise bureaucrat-packed Empowered Committee has dispensed with permanent representation from the Commerce Ministry. So much for India's export efforts.

Oil Imports From Russia, Others Examined

Nafta Agreement

93AS0139A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
8 Oct 92 p 9

[Text] New Delhi, Oct 7—In addition to the agreement reached with Russian suppliers for 800,000 million tonnes of crude when an Indian delegation visited Moscow recently, the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has finalised an agreement with Nafta Moscow, for supply of 80,000 to 100,000 tonnes of crude. This was done when a delegation from Moscow visited New Delhi last week.

Nafta Moscow will start supplying crude valued at around Rs. 35 crores from the last week of this month. The supplies will be made under "clearing dollar account" arrangement as envisioned in the protocol between the Governments of India and Russia. This is also expected to provide Indian exporters with an opportunity for greater exports against the import of crude.

India is expected to import around 28 million tonnes of crude and over 10 million tonnes of other petroleum products. India up to September has imported over 15 million tonnes of crude and over four million tonnes of petroleum products.

Russian Problems, Other Matters

93AS0139B Madras *THE HINDU* in English
15 Oct 92 p 7

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi—India's trade with Russia is likely to suffer a serious setback in the current year as the Russians have expressed their inability to supply more than one trillion tonnes of crude instead of four million tonnes which they had originally agreed as per the bilateral trade protocol signed with India for the calendar year 1992.

According to informed sources, this will push up the Indian purchase of crude in the spot market to nearly 11 million tonnes out of a projected import of 26.6 million tonnes and nearly 10 million tonnes of petroleum products during the current fiscal 1992-93. Against the earlier ratio of 80 percent term and 20 percent spot, the new arrangement would mean 65 percent term and 35 percent spot purchase of crude.

The canalising agent, the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), has long term agreements with National Oil Companies of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Malaysia and Russia. As the arrangement with Russia has now collapsed, the long term contracts for oil imports from the national oil companies would account for only 15 million tonnes though the price paid would be market related.

IOC had been dealing for two decades with the Russian enterprise Souyuz Naptha Export (SNE). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, SNE (sole canalising agent) lost its authority and other Russian companies became independent. The Russian Government then introduced a new export quota system for crude and earmarked quantities between 100,000 and 500,000 tonnes. In the process competition was built into the system. Consequently, IOC signed separate agreements with two new Russian companies, Ural Invest and Prodintorg for a total of one million tonnes.

Early last week when IOC wanted to tie up for new quantities of crude, it was reportedly told by the Russians that they were facing serious logistic problem as most refineries were located far away from the port. The Russian decision has also hit India's import of products mainly High Speed Diesel (HSD) and Standard Kerosene Oil (SKO).

Recently, an official team discussed with Azerbaijan the possibility of crude import. The idea was dropped as the crude was unsuitable for India. Sources said Russia accounted for 80 percent of the total exportable crude from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Unless cross country trade developed in the CIS 'We

cannot hope for additional quantities of oil and products' the sources said. Purchase of three million tonnes to cover the Russian shortfall may cost India a minimum of Rs [Rupees] 1,200 crores in hard currency.

At the beginning of 1992-93, on the basis of 60-40 partial convertibility of rupee, IOC was earmarked \$5.1 billions for oil imports—26.6 million tonnes of crude and 10 million tonnes of products. Depending upon the availability of indigenous crude, rising international oil prices, increase in demand, the total oil bill on crude, HSD and kerosene in 1992-93 may reach \$5.7 billions. This was exclusive of nearly \$300 millions being spent on import of LPG [Liquified Petroleum Gas], Lube, AVGAS and other petro products. Thus, IOC may stagger its market purchase of dollars above the allocated \$5.1 billions over the next five months to minimise the impact on the forex market.

Oil imports had always been financed directly by the Government till 1988-89. With deterioration in the balance of payments, IOC was instructed to opt for trade financing arrangement (TFA). Under the TFA, IOC bought oil and it was paid for by its banker SBI [State Bank of India] who, in turn, received payment from IOC after a credit period of 180 days. By 1990-91, even this arrangement came under pressure and SBI asked IOC to make its own arrangement. Sources said IOC successfully conducted the TFA with many foreign banks and with the improvement in India's BOP [balance of payments] position, the interest rate for 180 days credit was 'minimal' above the LIBOR [London Interbank Offer Rate].

At present India is rated 'BB' equal to lowest investment grade along with Turkey, Hungary, etc. Because of this rating IOC could not go in for TFA beyond 180 days. However, if India's credit rating were upgraded to A plus then IOC would be able to go in for long term finance facility. It was perhaps in this context, that IOC hoped to enter the European bond market in June 1993 which funds may help it to finance the setting up of its new refineries one at Karnal and another in Orissa with six million tonnes capacity each. While the total borrowing during 1992-93 by IOC may be slightly over one billion dollars, the sources said the corporation was comfortable as it did not pay more than 1.25 percent over LIBOR. A number of foreign banks have approached IOC to tie up its finance requirement with them. May be in future even this premium will come down.

The improvement in its financial manoeuvrability has emboldened IOC to set up two refineries. While the Karnal refinery received all clearances on October 7 the new zero date for completion of the project is four and a half years, the refinery to be located in East India or Orissa may take a little longer. The feasibility report for even the Orissa based refinery has been submitted and IOC has invited offers from parties to be its partner in the project.

Japanese Offer Credit for Plant Modernization

93AS0137A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA*
in English 8 Oct 92 p 15

[Article by Priya Ranjan Dash]

[Text] New Delhi, October 7—The Japanese conglomerate, Mitsui, has offered a line of credit of Rs [Rupees] 3,000 crores to India for the modernisation of the Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO). This is the single largest line of commercial credit offered to India since 1990 when the country's credit rating took a severe beating.

In a communication to the ministry of steel, Mitsui has pledged its support for the private party to be selected by the government to implement the Rs 6,500-crore IISCO modernisation project in a joint venture with the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL). While offering the credit, the Japanese giant has, however, stated that it does not want to take up the implementation of the project directly.

The government had recently invited offers from private companies, both Indian and foreign, for the implementation of the IISCO modernisation project. The Mitsui credit offer has come following this.

An expert committee, headed by Mr. P.L. Shankar, constituted by the government for finalising the arrangement for private sector participation in IISCO modernisation, has already shortlisted four parties out of the companies which had made their offers. The four—Mittals of the Ispat group, Tisco, Usha Rectifier and Mukund—have made on-the-spot assessment of the viability of the project at the Burnpur plant of IISCO and they are expected to submit their final offers shortly for evaluation by the committee.

Besides being an indication of the measure of international confidence in the liberalised Indian economy, the Mitsui offer has brightened up the prospects for large private investment in the country's sector. Steel ministry officials are jubilant as a large number of investors are evincing interest in putting up greenfield projects both in the integrated and secondary steel sectors.

Under the liberalised licensing policy introduced last year, the private sector is freely permitted to put up integrated steel plants up to a capacity of one million tonnes per annum using the blast furnace route of steel-making. The international climate has also turned favourable as the recession in the west and in Japan has forced steel producers to look towards countries like India, which have a natural advantage for locating steel mills. In the global market today a lot of steel machinery is going cheap, thus providing an opportunity for prospective investors in India.

While the investment prospects for the steel industry never looked brighter in the past, official sources concede that the delay in the finalisation of the financial package for the Daitari steel project is causing some

concern. The London-based non-resident Indian (NRI) industrialist, Mr. Swraj Paul, has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Orissa government for implementing this second steel project in the state.

Although the finance for the project was earlier slated to be tied up by now, Mr. Paul, who visited the state last week, has indicated that this might be delayed indefinitely. He has blamed the recent security scam for the delay. Mr. Paul, who later met the finance minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, and the steel minister, Mr. Santosh Mohan Dev, here, is also believed to have explained his difficulties in arranging funds from banks abroad because of the scam.

This, sources say, is far removed from the reality as the scam has not affected other prospective investors in the steel sector. In fact, the Mitsui offer should remove all doubts in this regard, they explain.

It is pointed out that Mr. Paul has a track record of backing out of large projects in the past. Mr. Paul, who had bagged the letter of intent for the Shahajahanpur fertiliser plant, pulled out of the project after months of inaction. In the steel sector also, Mr. Paul had offered to take up the modernisation of IISCO, but he soon developed cold feet.

Mr. Paul is understood to have told the government last week that he is sincere about the Daitari steel project. At the same time, he is said to have laid down some conditions, including the demand for a reduction in the import duty on steel machinery to 30 percent from the present level of 60 percent.

The steel ministry on its own had earlier made out a case for a duty reduction so as to put the steel sector on a par with other core industries like power and coal, which enjoyed a concessional duty of 30 percent of capital goods exports. But the government had taken the view that the present duty rate was appropriate considering the low price of steel machinery in the international market.

Exports One Billion Dollars Under Target

93AS0147E Bombay *TIMES OF INDIA* in English
24 Oct 92 p 9

[Article by Priya Ranjan Dash: "Exports May Miss Target by \$1 Billion"]

[Text] New Delhi, October 23. The country may miss the export target of \$20.1 billion by a wide margin of \$1 billion, going by the export performance trend up to August and the current projections for the remaining months of 1992-93.

The ministry of commerce reckons that the 4.6 percent export growth experienced during April-August, 1992-93, would accelerate in the subsequent months, but this would be inadequate for achieving the export growth target of 12.8 percent for the year as a whole. It is projected that from August till March, on a month-to-month comparison over the previous year, export growth rates would definitely be in double digits, but lower than 15 percent. At this rate, the country may

achieve exports worth only about \$19 billion during 1992-93, thus falling short of the target by \$1 billion.

Officials point out that the remarkable export growth of 15.9 percent in August this year over the same month of the previous year did not necessarily mean that this high growth rate could be sustained in the subsequent months. It is argued that the monthwise growth rates have shown a wide variation during the current year. For instance in June, exports grew by 9.9 percent, but this growth suddenly dropped to 7.1 percent in July.

Several factors are being attributed to for this subdued export performance. But it is generally agreed that the failure to meet the export target this year could prove costly as it would have severe repercussions on the balance of payments situation. This could also derail the economic reforms programme. For the success of the reforms, it has been assumed that the country's exports should be growing at a rate of 14 percent in dollar terms per annum to be able to tackle the balance of payments difficulties and service its external debt.

The grim export outlook is both on account of a non-optimal internal policy environment and adverse external factors, including the prevailing recession in major Western economies and the collapse of the erstwhile Soviet market.

The commerce ministry has long upheld the views of exporters that the new policy environment for export brought about through a series of measures since July 1991 is clearly less conducive compared to the policy environment of the latter part of the '80s when exports grew at a fast rate of 16-18 percent in dollar terms.

Under the new policy regime, exporters are no longer entitled to cash compensatory support and the replenishment licence scheme. On the other hand, exporters bear the burden of high interest rates on export credit. The high domestic inflation rate has neutralised the benefit of rupee devaluation for exports and has ensured higher profitability in domestic sales. The partial convertibility of the rupee has benefited exporters only marginally as it has been demonstrated that the system has actually meant a "tax" of 15 percent on exporters.

The collapse of the erstwhile Soviet market, which accounted for 12 percent of India's exports, has forced exporters to seek growth avenues in the hard currency markets where the recessions is playing truant.

The ministry has been pressing hard for the introduction of full rupee convertibility on the trade account and a substantial reduction in export credit rates for improving the export policy environment. Mid-way through the year, the ministry's efforts have not succeeded in giving exporters a better deal. Export enthusiasm has thus taken a beating.

The minister of state for industry, Mr. P. J. Kurien, who is holding the additional charge of commerce since the resignation of Mr. P. Chidambaram, reflects this when

he says: "We would try to achieve the target, but whether we can do it would depend on the introduction of full convertibility and reduction in interest rates."

Pact Signed for Soft Loan From Germany

93AS0136A Madras THE HINDU in English
13 Oct 92 p 6

[Text] New Delhi, Oct. 12—India and Germany today finalised an agreement for the extension of German assistance of Rs [Rupees] 919 crores during the current financial year. Of this, Rs. 638 crores will be in the form of soft loans, Rs. 120 crores grant and Rs. 161 crores financial credit.

The soft loan from Germany will be utilised by India for import of potash fertilizer and for projects in the areas of power and lignite. A portion of this will also go to the financial institutions as well as support for the National Renewal Fund (NRF) set up by the Indian Government in order to implement the exit policy for the public sector. The German contribution is expected to be around DM 50 million. The soft loan has a 40-year repayment period, including a 10-year grace period, and will carry an interest of 0.75 percent.

The grant component will be utilised for the financing of basic education in the States of Bihar and Orissa, a programme undertaken for the first time by the Germans, and for construction of housing facilities for the weaker sections of society. The funds in this case will be channelised through the Housing Development Finance Corporation and the Housing and Urban Development Corporation for the construction of cyclone shelters and low cost housing projects. The other projects earmarked for grant assistance include environment protection, development of natural resources and poverty alleviation programmes.

Mixed credit: The financial credit of Rs. 161 crores in the form of mixed credit, comprising soft loan and export credit from the German Development Loan Corporation (called KFW Bank), will be utilised for the purchase of waste heat boilers and steel turbine generators at the Uran plant in Maharashtra.

The agreement for the assistance was signed here by the Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs, Mr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, and the German Ambassador, Mr. Hans-Gerog Wieck. Making a brief presentation at the ceremony, the Ambassador said the assistance in the current financial year may be slightly below those of the preceding years but the important point was that the proportion of quick disbursing funds was as high as 50 percent in the latest agreement. He also pointed out that along with the financial assistance and the scholarships offered by the Central and State Governments in Germany, the total volume of funding extended to India this time worked out to Rs. 1,183 crores. Also, social welfare projects like watershed development, basic education, rural water supply and sanitation, lift irrigation, forestry

and integrated rural development programmes were being financed on a large scale.

Rao Addresses Businessmen, Deplores Scam

93AS0127A Bombay THE SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA in English 11 Oct 92 pp 1, 30

[Text] New Delhi, October 10: The Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, today said the multi-crore securities scam had caused a "great setback" to the reforms programme and indicated a drastic overhaul of the banking system to ensure that such scandals did not recur, PTI reports.

In hard-hitting remarks while inaugurating the 65th annual meeting of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) here, Mr. Rao said the scam had affected the country adversely and had occurred at the wrong time.

"The wound may heal but the scar will remain," the prime minister said, apparently in his first-ever detailed observations on the over Rs. 3,500-crore scandal, which was unearthed in April.

The scam has "come as a great setback to us, we cannot afford things like this when we are trying to take a new path," Mr. Rao said, adding it had tarnished the country's image abroad.

He said the government was determined to see that such scams did not recur and wanted it to be solved once and for all.

Mr. Rao, in his 45-minute address, dealt with the exit policy, the need for setting up realistic foreign direct investment targets, financial sector reforms, industrial growth and exports.

He said the scam had underscored the need for rapid reforms in banks and the financial sector to arrest the irregularities, make them more efficient and their operations transparent.

The prime minister, while expressing unhappiness about the occurrence of the scam, said a big overhaul of the banking and financial system was needed.

He said the government would go ahead with the reforms in full swing and sought suggestions from the industry on how to prevent such scandals.

Mr. Rao said the government had already brought about reforms in the financial sector, based on the recommendations of the Narasimham committee report and the aim now would be to create an efficient and viable banking system.

He said despite the scam the investment mood of the general public had not been affected and during the current year the companies were expected to raise Rs [Rupees] 15,000 crores from the capital market.

Mr. Rao said economic reforms were a continuous process and measures like full convertibility of the rupee on current account and rationalisation of interest rates would be brought about in due course.

The prime minister, while tracing the various reforms undertaken in the past 15 months, said "The worst of the crisis is over. But we cannot rest. There is need to protect and consolidate what has already been done. There is no stopping point on a slope."

He said the path the country had undertaken was a one-way traffic. There could be no relenting, no looking back and no one could afford to be complacent.

The prime minister said following the measures undertaken there was a distinct improvement in the economic situation with exports picking up, industrial growth showing a swing and the balance of payments position getting comfortable.

He said agricultural production would show a rise with a good monsoon and inflation would get under control.

Sounding a note of caution, the prime minister said it would not be realistic to expect too much of foreign investment and underscored the need to fix targets which were achievable. He reminded that India was operating in an environment in which several other countries were also vying for foreign investments.

Mr. Rao said there should be no disappointment if the flow of foreign investment was not up to expectations. What was required was a certain amount of hard-headed assessment of the investment scenario, he added.

The prime minister said while reforms were necessary they also called for appropriate response from the industrialists. In this context, he urged top industrialists to bring about a functional change in their attitude, particularly about resource utilisation and introduction of modern technology.

Responding to suggestions made earlier by the outgoing FICCI president, Dr. V.S. Dutt, the prime minister said the Centre recognised the role of state governments in giving a fillip to industry by effectively implementing reforms at the grassroot level.

He said a meeting of state industry ministers would be convened this month to see what could be done in this direction.

In this context he welcomed the visit by some chief ministers to different parts of the world to see for themselves what were the requirements there and how best the state could meet them.

On the exit policy and the national renewal fund, the prime minister assured that while implementing any schemes, the government would not stir from seeing that welfare of the workers was ensured. While looking for efficiency, the human aspect of development would remain foremost, he said.

In this context, Mr. Rao referred to the Rs. 700-crore programme of resurrecting the sick National Textile Corporation (NTC). It was a unique experiment by any standard and if it succeeded it would be a pace-setter for future programmes, he said.

He reiterated that the government was not anti-public sector but at the same time it did not consider it a holy cow. The time when it was considered so was over, he added.

Mr. Rao said the thrust was not a change from the old dogma to a new one but from old dogma to no dogma, and what was important was result-orientedness.

Details of New Export-Import Policy Told

*93AS0120A Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 3 Oct 92 p 11*

[Boldface words as published]

[Text] **New Delhi, October 2 (UNI):** The government has allowed import of capital goods worth Rs. [Rupees] 1546 crore and announced several other measures to liberalise the Export-Import policy, including decanalisation of import of some fertilisers during the first quarter of the current financial year.

An official release on Thursday said the import of capital goods was allowed under the export promotion capital goods scheme permitting the imports at a concessional rate of 25 percent of customs duty. The import was allowed subject to export obligation equivalent to three times the CIF [cost, insurance, freight] value of the capital goods.

Import of cinematograph feature films and video films was permitted without a licence. Permission for import of newsprint from Russia and other republics of the former Soviet Union by non-actual users, liberalisation of import of electronic accessories and decanalisation of import of di-ammonium phosphate were among the other changes made in the policy during July-September this year, the release added.

The government made various changes in export promotion policy and procedures. Value addition norms under duty exemption scheme under trade protocol were reduced from 233 percent to 100 percent. Input-output norms for 40 additional export products were also allowed.

Value addition norms for export of polyester staple fibre under quantity based advance licensing scheme were reduced from 33 percent to 25 percent on July 13, 1992.

Units desirous of supplying inputs to firms situated in export processing zone were made eligible to get special imprest licences for all products (except diamond, gem and jewellery sector).

Value addition norms for the export of computer hardware/peripherals were reduced from 33 percent to 15

percent and input-output norms for five more products and revision in norms for certain products involving the use of packing material were notified. Certain value restrictions have also been notified for the import of packing materials.

Input-output norms and value addition norms for the export products requiring cloves, cinnamon and cassia as an input under duty exemption scheme were notified in August, 1992.

The scope of deemed exports sector with duty exemption benefits was enlarged so as to include supplies made to Kerala Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation.

Procedure for grant of bulk licences for rough diamonds to service the requirement of replenishment licence holders were also notified in August, the release added.

Eximscripts or rep licences already issued and valid only for the imports to be made from RPA [rupee payment area], have also been made valid for import of rough diamonds from RPA countries.

Certain other changes have also been made in respect of the import of capital goods, raw materials, components, consumables and drugs and medicines etc. Thirty-nine life saving drugs formulations, five life saving bulk drugs, one drug intermediate for manufacture of life saving drugs, seven life saving equipment and 28 sight saving equipment were made eligible to be imported at official rate of exchange.

Accessories, components, parts and spares of consumer durables except those which are specifically included in the negative list of imports were allowed to be imported without a licence. Such imports shall be subject to the actual user condition and no transfer of the imported goods shall be made without the permission of the chief controller of imports and exports.

Cinematograph feature films and video films were made permissible for import without a licence.

Newsprint has been made permissible for import from Russia and other republics of former Soviet Union on 15th September, 1992 by non-actual users subject to the condition that the import of newsprint shall be only through an escrow account designated in U.S. dollars opened in a commercial bank in India.

Old ships and vessels for the purpose of breaking were made permissible for import without a licence.

A provision has been made for import of prototypes/samples on payment by actual users or research and development institutions.

Cod liver oil (other than pharmacopoeial grade), squid liver oil or a mixture thereof were deleted from the negative list of imports of fish meal in powdered form and wheat gluten is freely permitted.

Import of crude palm stearin was decanalised.

All drugs, medicines and life saving/sight saving equipment can be imported freely at market rate of exchange. Import at official rate is permissible only for the items already specified separately.

Vishakhapatnam Plant Adds to Export Earnings

93AS0122A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA*
in English 5 Oct 92 p 14

[Text] New Delhi, October 4 (PTI): India has entered the Chinese steel market in a big way with the delivery of 30,000 tonnes of quality wire rods by the Vishakhapatnam steel plant (VSP) and expectations of a repeat performance by the year end.

Mr. J. Mehra, director (operations) VSP told PTI that the plant's export target was 175,000 tonnes of wire rods to earn foreign exchange worth Rs. [Rupees] 150 crores during the current year.

Last year, the VSP, the country's first shore-based plant fully commissioned last August, exported 1,500 tonnes of wire rods, 500 tonnes to Japan and 1,000 tonnes to Sri Lanka netting foreign exchange worth Rs. 1.05 crores, Mr. Mehra said.

The VSP has embarked on an ambitious export target of quality rods to exploit the foreign market. The overhead cost of distribution of the same material within the country, particularly, in the north and north-eastern region is very high.

To facilitate exports, the VSP plans to set up an office at Singapore by the year-end in order to develop its own client.

The plant fetches \$263 to \$264 per tonne of wire rods, which is four to five dollars more than the prices offered by others in the field because of high quality. Already orders have been received for wire rods from Vietnam (25,000 tonnes), Thailand (10,000 tonnes) and Singapore (7,000 tonnes), which are now in various stages of delivery.

Mr. Mehra said Tata Exports, which has an exclusive market in Africa, particularly in Zambia and Egypt, has passed on its orders for wire rods to the VSP. To boost exports, the plant also plans to export billets soon.

Referring to achievements of the plant, Mr. Mehra said the VSP was expected to return positive gross profit at the end of this year from the negative gross profit of Rs. 81 crores last year.

Reserve Bank Reviews Monetary, Credit Policy

Excerpts of Review

93AS0121A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
15 Oct 92 p 17

[First paragraph is introduction; boldface, italicized words as published]

[Text] In a communication to all the scheduled commercial banks, spelling out the credit policy for the busy season, the Reserve Bank of India [RBI] provides a quick review of the monetary and credit developments during the first half of the current financial year and the likely developments during the coming months. Excerpts:

There are distinct signs of recovery of the economy during 1992-93. Although the onset on monsoon was delayed, it gathered momentum in August and eventually the rainfall was normal except in a few meteorological sub-divisions. Agricultural production is expected to show a rise of about two percent in 1992-93 as against a decline of one percent in 1991-92.

The index of industrial production has shown some improvement in the early months of 1992-93. The country has embarked on a major structural reform of the system. By and large, the macro-economic reform in the recent period is proceeding satisfactorily. The rate of growth of industrial production is expected to be 4 to 5 percent in 1992-93 as against a fractional rise of 0.1 percent recorded in 1991-92.

On the basis of the expected increase in the growth of agricultural and industrial production, overall real GDP [Gross Domestic Product] is expected to show an improvement of around 3.5 percent as compared with an estimated increase of two percent in 1991-92.

Close watch on prices

The deceleration of the rate of inflation to a single digit level and weakening of the inflationary expectations is to a large extent attributable to the strong fiscal adjustment, as also the cautious monetary policy stance. The increase in prices of petroleum products, fertilizers and procurement prices of agricultural commodities would exert an inevitable upward pressure on prices. The behaviour of prices, therefore, needs to be watched closely in the coming months.

Reduced RBI credit to Govt.

The Central Government is committed to bringing about a substantial reduction in its gross fiscal deficit from about 6.5 percent of GDP in 1991-92 to five percent of GDP in 1992-93. The increase in net Reserve Bank credit to the Central Government in the current financial year up to September 18 was Rs [Rupees] 5,513 crores (six percent) as against Rs. 8,891 crores (10.2 percent) last year. This reduction has been possible because of the fiscal adjustment as also the activation of internal debt management instruments. Again, the growth of net domestic assets (reserve money minus net foreign exchange assets of RBI) of the Reserve Bank in the first half of 1992-93 has been well within the projected ceiling.

The pace of overall monetary expansion (M_3) has, however, been very strong so far with an increase in the first half of 1992-93 of Rs. 23,662 crores (7.5 percent) as compared with an increase of Rs. 19,116 crores (7.2

percent) in the corresponding period of the previous year. The year-on-year increase in M_3 as at the end of September was as much as 18.9 percent which is way above the desired objective of a growth of less than 11 percent in the full financial year 1992-93. A substantial part of the increase in M_3 above the projected path is attributable to the growth in net foreign exchange assets in the first half of 1992-93 as against a large projected decline.

While the deposit growth so far is well above the trajectory, consistent with the working estimate of deposit growth set out in April 1992 of Rs. 27,000 crores (11.7 percent) banks must plan their credit deployment in the second half of 1992-93 on the assumption that the inevitable flattening out of the increase in net foreign exchange assets and the withdrawal of short-term deposits like margin money accounts would result in a much slower growth of deposits in the second half of 1992-93. As such, the deposit growth for the full financial year may be only somewhat above the working estimate set out in April 1992.

Non-food credit showed a phenomenal increase in the first half of 1992-93 of Rs. 10,805 crores (8.9 percent) as against a nominal increase of Rs. 135 crores (0.1 percent) in the comparable period of 1991-92. The incremental net non-food credit-deposit ration worked out to 60.9 percent during the period March 20 to September 18 as against 0.8 percent during the corresponding period in 1991-92.

Although the estimates of resources indicate that the availability of lendable resources in the second half would be lower than in the comparable period of the previous year, the new credit policy measures would ensure that banks would have adequate lendable resources to facilitate the recovery of output in both agricultural and industrial sectors and also support the genuine credit requirements of small-scale industries and export sectors.

Excessive reliance on money market

Of late, dependence of some banks on the call-notice money market has showed a sharp increase. In the aftermath of the recent irregularities in the securities market, more resources are flowing into the call/notice money market and this has moderated the call money rates. Certain banks have overextended credit positions and their structural dependence on the volatile money market is a matter of concern. These banks would be strongly advised to contain their non-food credit expansion within their stable deposit resources and chronic excessive dependence on the money market should be avoided.

While monetary policy should support the revival of agricultural and industrial production, the anti-inflationary stance of monetary policy cannot be diluted. While devising the monetary policy package, attention

has been given to certain basic ingredients of the financial sector reform such as the reduced reliance on reserve requirements and the development of the Government securities market.

Analyst's Report

93AS0121B Madras *THE HINDU* in English
15 Oct 92 p 28

[Article by D.G. Gupte; boldface words as published]

[Text] The monetary and credit policy for the second half of 1992-93, which synchronises with the major part of the traditional busy season announced by the RBI [Reserve Bank of India] Governor, Mr. S. Venkitaraman, on October 8, has given comfort to financial circles in that the trend of reforms in the financial sector has not been reversed. At one time, it was feared that the authorities might adopt a cautious approach following the multi-crore scam.

The Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, has admitted publicly that the scam has caused great setback to the reforms programme and has indicated a drastic overhaul of the banking system to ensure that such scams do not recur.

Trade and industry circles had been clamouring for a drastic reduction in interest rates, since many sectors have been experiencing recessionary conditions partly because of high cost of credit and partly because of non-availability of bank funds.

The RBI has however chosen to reduce the commercial bank lending rate on credit limits over Rs. 2 lakh from 19 percent to 18 percent and a similar cut in interest rate on rupee export credit. Simultaneously, interest rates on fresh deposits and on renewal of deposits on maturity have also been reduced by one percentage point for maturities of 46 days to three years. The Union Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, has indicated that interest rates would be reduced further once the inflationary trend would warrant such a move.

Although the inflation rate has come down in recent months, the monetary authorities do not seem to be willing to play with monetary aggregates, since doing so would be nothing but playing with fire. As it is, inflation and law and order situation in many parts of the country are the main political issues, being faced by the Government for quite some time. While the monetary authorities might be justified in not taking a complacent view of the current situation, they need not be over-cautious. Once definite trends are visible, they should be bold enough to ensure that high cost and non-availability of funds for industry do not throttle this vital sector of the economy.

Signs of recovery

There are distinct signs of recovery of the economy in 1992-93. Although the onset of monsoon was delayed, it

gathered momentum in August, and eventually the rainfall was normal except in a few meteorological subdivisions. Agricultural production is expected to show a rise of about two percent in the current year against the decline of one percent in 1991-92. The index of industrial production has shown some improvement in the early months of 1992-93.

Slower deposit growth

While the growth in bank deposits has decelerated, that in bank credit has shown a rise in the first half of 1992-93. Aggregate deposits of scheduled commercial banks have shown a net rise of Rs [Rupees] 17,756 crores (7.7 percent) in the first half against the rise of Rs. 16,647 crores (8.6 percent) in the same period of the preceding year. While demand deposits have declined by Rs. 2,533 crores against the rise of Rs. 3,253 crores, time deposits have shown a rise of Rs. 20,289 crores (Rs. 13,394 crores). While the deposit growth so far is well above the earlier estimate, a much slower deposit growth is expected in the second half of 1992-93 owing to the inevitable flattening out of the net increase in foreign exchange assets and the withdrawal of short-term deposits like margin money accounts. The RBI, therefore, feels that the deposit growth for the full year may be only somewhat above the working estimate of Rs. 27,000 crores set up in April 1992.

Total bank credit has recorded a net expansion of Rs. 9,846 crores in the first half of 1992-93. Food credit has contracted by Rs. 959 crores against the projected increase of Rs. 300 crores. Non-food credit has registered a net expansion of Rs. 10,805 crores against the small expansion of Rs. 135 crores in the same period of 1991-92. According to the RBI, food credit is likely to expand by about Rs. 1,500 crores in the second half of 1992-93, which synchronises with the busy season.

Probably, in view of the expected decline in the lendable resources of banks, the RBI has taken measures to augment these resources of banks by a phased reduction in the statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) from 38.5 percent to 37.5 percent, which would release about Rs. 1,650 crores. The release of impounded cash balances under the incremental cash reserve ratio (CRR) of ten percent of the incremental net demand and time liabilities accruing between May 4, 1991 and April 17, 1992, would release about Rs. 1,280 crores.

Securities refinance facilities

Banking circles have welcomed the introduction of the Government securities refinance facility by the RBI from the fortnight beginning October 31. Another significant measure announced by the RBI is the Repos auction for government dated securities from the RBI's portfolio. Some bankers feel that this repurchase window could be taken as the same as the ready-forward deals, which banks were transacting between themselves in the past, and which were banned by the RBI recently.

The establishment of an internal debt management cell in the RBI to exclusively attend to internal debt management policy and operations, consisting of open market operations, market borrowings, State Government ways and means advances and other related matters is a welcome move. It is good that the RBI is starting open market operations like many central banks in developed countries. This cell can evolve new policy instruments and shore up delivery capabilities for facilitating the emergence of an active and efficient government securities market. However, for making this cell efficient and meaningful, it should be manned by experienced and pragmatic persons who will have enough authority to take independent decisions on the spot. If this happens, a recurrence of the securities scam, which has rattled the entire financial sector, can be prevented.

Minister Commissions New Rapid Action Force

93AS0128A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
8 Oct 92 p 6

[Boldface words as published]

[Text] New Delhi, October 7: Rioters, processional and other, are going to find it difficult to indulge in frenzied acts of violence henceforth. For the blue dungaree-clad men of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) have arrived.

Commissioned by the Union Home Minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, today, the RAF will interact with police to quell communal riots effectively.

The young men of the 10-battalion strong force of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) demonstrated their methods of tackling riot situations with innovative and new technique at the formal inaugural ceremony here.

Grenades went off amidst clashing mobs, followed by lobbing of teargas. Young professionals of the RAF arrived and brought the "situation" under control in "zero response time." Casualties were minimum, owing to the timely action.

The RAF has been raised from amongst the ranks and officers of the CRPF over the last couple of months.

Mr. Chavan said the force would not only tackle a riot, but also solve the problems that led to the riot.

The CRPF Director General, Mr. D.P.N. Singh, said the force would be at the beck and call of the local authorities and do its utmost and not treat its job as a professional one. Indoctrination and motivation were the basis of all effective action.

Mr. Singh said the officers of the 10 battalions would have maps of the towns where they would be deployed besides the culture and history of the place. The funds for the RAF's maintenance would be met from the budget of the CRPF, by cutting down on other fronts, if necessary.

The Home Minister said the RAF was in no way meant to play the role of the local police. "Wherever the situation has taken a serious turn, RAF men would be deployed," he said. The use of rubber bullets, he added, was to minimise any casualty.

The force has a mixed strength of men from all communities. Its men have been exposed to the concept of behavioural sciences, contemporary social rights and sanctity of human rights.

Place of station: Initially the battalions will be stationed at 10 communally sensitive towns, Aligarh, Ghaziabad, Meerut, Jamshedpur, Darbhanga, Jaipur, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Allahabad and Hyderabad. Adopting a military style of quelling mob frenzy is only supplementary to the work of the local authorities. The RAF men will give medical aid at the riot spot.

Mr. Chavan gave away medals to 33 CRPF personnel. He also inspected a parade and witnessed a march past, besides taking the salute.

Open mind on Jharkhand: Talking to presspersons after the launching ceremony, Mr. Chavan said the Centre would consider the issue of Jharkhand with an open mind and would welcome further discussions with political parties, Ministers of the States concerned and other parties to the imbroglio. Talks had been held with leaders of major political parties, he said. Proposing further consultations with Central and State leaders to ascertain their views, he said only after such consultations, a note would be put up before the Political Affairs Committee and to the Cabinet, if necessary.

On the issue of the demand for an autonomous hill council in Ladakh on the pattern of Darjeeling, he said the social boycott in Leh should be lifted and the "Jompa" (Buddhist monastery) should be allowed to be built in Kargil area. There were pre-conditions to a further round of talks on the issue, he added.

Asked when elections would be held in Jammu and Kashmir, he said: "We have not taken any decision yet." But he indicated that elections would depend upon an assessment of stability in the area.

About a possible extradition treaty with France also, he said it was on the agenda of both the heads of the States when they met in Paris recently. The form of the treaty, he visualised, would be similar to that of the British.

Mr. Chavan said priority would be given for the expansion and modernisation of the RAF, but not at the cost of reduction in the allocation of budget for paramilitary forces. "We will see to it that they get adequate funds."

UNI reports:

The Centre, the Home Minister said, was free to despatch the RAF to quell a communal flare-up even without the concurrence of the State Government concerned.

"If the Centre feels that the situation is going out of hand and the State Government had not requisitioned the RAF, it will be rushed to the trouble-spot without waiting for the State's request," he said.

A supplementary force: The force was a supplementary force as the law and order was a State subject under the Constitution, he said, but added that there was a provision in the charter of the RAF that the Centre could rush it to any trouble-spot anywhere "on its own."

Asked why the RAF was made a component of the CRPF and whether there was any proposal of it being made a separate central police organisation, he said the CRPF would continue to have operational command over the RAF, as the Government intended to keep it within the fold of the CRPF "for the time being."

Asked whether the police forces of the country would be equipped with rubber bullets on the pattern of the RAF, Mr. Chavan said "using only rubber bullets can be counter-productive sometimes." He ruled out the expansion of the force, saying that its present strength was good enough. Its expansion could be considered only after gauging the public response.

Rao, Pawar Address Commanders' Conference

93AS0125A Madras *THE HINDU in English*
13 Oct 92 p 1

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, October 12: The Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao has reiterated India's commitment to continue the dialogue with Pakistan to resolve all contentious issues. The Prime Minister was addressing the annual Combined Commanders' Conference which was also attended by the Defence Minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar.

In the context of the changes in the international security environment the Prime Minister highlighted India's initiative to promote Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) with neighbouring countries. And in this regard he felt that the direct exchanges between the armed forces of India and other countries which included joint naval exercises had not only promoted goodwill but had enriched the forces professionally as well.

Both the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister drew attention to avoiding the emergence of 'unacceptable voids' in essential stores. In this context the Prime Minister emphasised the need for 'reliable maintenance' of existing assets by optimising available resources.

The Defence Minister referred to the formation of 'task forces' already established with focus on indigenisation—especially for the equipment and spares which were no longer available from erstwhile sources. He urged the Chiefs of Staff and the Secretaries in the Ministry to review and 'reprioritise' all existing activities.

Asia Watch Report on Human Rights Refuted*93AS0132A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 7 Oct 92 p 11*

[Article by Prasun Sonwalkar; quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, October 6—India has described the latest Asia Watch report on police killings and alleged human rights violations in Andhra Pradesh as “highly questionable” and one that is replete with “dangerous pre-judgment” about a country and a system dealing with over 800 million people.

The 49-page report, titled: “Police Killings and Rural Violence in Andhra Pradesh,” was released on September 20, coinciding with the visit of the Union home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, to London in connection with signing of an extradition treaty between India and the United Kingdom. A 21-page rejoinder to the Asia Watch report has been drawn up by the Union home ministry.

The rejoinder recalls the September 14 conference of chief ministers on the issue of setting up a human rights commission in India and quotes the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, as saying: “We cannot have a situation in which human rights are seen to be a preserve of the practitioners of terrorism and secessionism while those dealing with the menace courageously...are condemned for violation of human rights.”

The rejoinder traces the growth of the Naxalite movement from the sixties in West Bengal and notes that it had witnessed a decline throughout the seventies. However, from 1988, there had been a “vertical and horizontal expansion” of the movement, taking a firm grip in several districts, particularly in Andhra Pradesh, and other states like Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

According to official figures for three years (1989-91), the number of Naxalite-related incidents and deaths were the most in Andhra Pradesh, compared to the corresponding figures for the other states. The People's War Group (PWG) was allegedly responsible for 474 deaths during the three-year period while the activities of the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) operating in central Bihar accounted for 150 deaths in the same period.

“In Andhra Pradesh, of the persons killed in 1991, 212 belong to the downtrodden classes whose cause the Naxalites avowedly espouse. Fifty police personnel were killed in 1991 and 34 policemen have already laid down their lives so far this year in countering the Naxalite menace. Of the persons kidnapped, there were six MLAs [member of Legislative Assembly], 26 ‘mandal praja parishad’ presidents, 58 village heads, 197 government officials and 42 policemen,” the rejoinder states.

It, however, regretted that human rights groups did not take the same pains when it came to establishing their allegations before commissions of inquiry set by various

state governments. Such a commission had been set up to investigate the killing of Mr. Ghulam Rasool, a journalist with a Hyderabad-based Telugu newspaper in December 1991, which has been highlighted by the Asia Watch report.

Stating that the violent Naxalite philosophy had grave implications to society and the system as a whole, the rejoinder recalls the introduction to the Asia Watch report which states that “the history of the conflict in Andhra Pradesh over land ownership and land reform describes a pattern of systematic human rights violation that is among the worst anywhere in India...A government campaign which has used the threat of radical guerilla movement, popularly known as Naxalites, to justify the resort of state violence against all forms of peasant resistance and against other critics of state policy.”

To this, the ministry replies: “Indeed, this is a scathing indictment, and would seem to suggest that the state is the enemy of its own people. Never mind that India has survived, as a society, for all its diversity, for thousands of years, and as a vibrant democracy for nearly half a century, where many others crumbled easily in the post-colonial world,” the sweeping generalisations, it says, appears highly questionable.

The home ministry discerns an attempt to show the “soft side” of the Naxalites' actions in the Asia Watch report and cites various extracts from it to substantiate this. The rejoinder says that such treatment could make messiahs out of murderers; and, that the efforts of violent groups to supplant established administrative and judicial structures would lead to anarchy, does not seem to have received any consideration. It, however, admitted that there were weaknesses in the system as far as the issue of land rights is concerned.

It would be unfortunate, the rejoinder adds, if conclusions regarding the legal system of the country were drawn on the basis of special enactments like the terrorist and disruptive activities (prevention) act, which is meant to deal with a particular kind of situation effectively. It claims that prosecutions had been launched against many army police personnel also since it could not be a law unto themselves.

According to the rejoinder, the left extremists fielded 39 candidates for parliament and 67 for state assembly elections in 1989. In Andhra Pradesh, their performance was “dismal” in the parliamentary elections while in the assembly elections, they won two seats. Their performance in the 1991 parliamentary elections has also been described as “dismal.”

“The point to be pondered is that should be done to deal with violent and patently subversive acts against the society and the state, of groups who are on the fringe of society and seek to derive power by means of complete lawlessness.

It has also to be considered whether the allegations, in many cases unsubstantiated, made by those visibly close to such groups and providing them with intellectual moorings, should suffice to indict a whole system on the basis of selective interpretation of certain laws and circumstances," the rejoinder states.

Space Official Addresses Parliament Panel

93AS0135A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
8 Oct 92 p 9

[Text] New Delhi, Oct. 7—The agreement with Russia on the development of cryogenic engine technology is progressing as per schedule, the Secretary of the Department of Space, Prof. U.R. Rao, told members of the Consultative Committee on Science and Technology today.

"The work on the facilities to test indigenously fabricated cryo-engines has already begun the first launch of the Geo-synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) can take place in 1995-96, with the capability of launching one every six months after the first flight," he said.

Dr. Rao said the U.S. Government had imposed trade sanctions against the ISRO [Indian Space Research Organization] because of its contract with M/s. GLAVK-OOSMOS of Russia in January 1991, for transfer of cryo technology. "The cryogenic engine is only a small upper stage for the Indian GSLV required for launching communication satellites. With the indigenous capability built over several years, it should be possible to carry out approved programmes during the Plan period. To ensure that the schedule is kept, several long term measures like development of alternate sources for electronic components are being taken," he added.

INSAT-2C launch: The ISRO Chief said the INSAT-2C was likely to be launched by mid-1995 and was being configured to carry a few Ku band transponders in place of the very high resolution meteorological payload.

The satellite medium was most suitable for developmental and educational communications and must be used for the purpose. All efforts were being made to achieve self-reliance in the space programme, he added.

Monsoon forecast: The Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology, Dr. Rama Rao, said the successful monsoon forecast by the meteorological department had validated the indigenously developed monsoon model.

Dr. Rao said disaster warning systems had been set up on the east and west coasts. This helped reduce the toll in cyclone in Andhra Pradesh in 1991 to an estimated 1000 from about 10,000 people in 1977.

The scientific survey for the entire country had been completed, he added.

Members' objection: Today's Consultative Committee Meeting nearly got postponed when MPs [members of Parliament] attending the meet objected to the absence of the Prime Minister, who is the Chairman of the Committee.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, who holds charge of the Ministry of Science and Technology [S&T], failed for the first time to attend the meeting. This was the third Consultative Committee for S&T since Mr. Rao took over as Prime Minister.

At the outset, the president of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, who is a member of the Committee, expressed his objection to holding the meeting in the absence of the Prime Minister. Prof. R.R. Pramanik (CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist]), as well as some other members, said the meeting should be held only when the Prime Minister was present, so that queries of the members could be answered.

Minister's assurance: After hectic confabulations on whether the meeting could be postponed, the Minister of State for S&T, Mr. P.R. Kumaramangalam pacified the members by saying that the meeting could be continued at a later date with the Prime Minister in the chair.

The members reluctantly allowed the Secretary, Department of Space, Dr. U.R. Rao and Secretary, DST [Department of Science and Technology], Dr. Rama Rao to make their presentations. However, none of the members asked any questions.

Among the scientists who attended the meeting were Prof. U.R. Rao from Bangalore and Dr. P.K. Iyengar, Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy, from Bombay. Mr. N. Vittal, Secretary, Department of Electronics and Dr. D.D. Joshi, Director-General, CSIR [Council of Scientific and Industrial Research], were present.

The MPs who attended the meeting were Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, Dr. Shrikant Jichkar, Mr. Vithalrao Jadhav (all Rajya Sabha) and Mr. Gopinath Gajapati, Mr. Prithviraj Chavan, Mr. D. Pandian, and Prof. R.R. Pramanik (all Lok Sabha).

Fifty Thousand Muslims Said Performing Haj Annually

93AS0116D Bombay *TIMES OF INDIA* (Supplement)
in English 23 Oct 92 p III

[Article by Ahmed Zakaria, vice chairman, Central Haj Committee (India): "Haj Pilgrimage by 50,000 Indians Annually"]

[Text] Of the 2.5 lakh pilgrims, who annually go to Makkah, about 50,000 are from India. Of these, some 25,000 go through Haj Committee while about 25,000 go through private agencies working all over the country.

Formerly, pilgrims, who go through the Haj Committee were exclusively going from Bombay in 5 Mogul Line ships. But now only one ship takes 4,500 Indian pilgrims

while the remaining 21,000 go by airplanes chartered by the Haj Committee. The Committee functions under the Government of India Act of 1959 under which it is constituted as a central body to look after all the arrangements of the pilgrims' traffic.

A 19-member Haj Committee under the Act is formed and is under the control of the Haj Cell in the Ministry of External Affairs. Formerly all Haj formalities were centralised in Bombay. All pilgrims must pass through this city. The travel formalities such as Haj passports, health certificates, foreign exchange, visa, etc., are looked after by the Haj Committee.

Facilities

But now the Haj Committee is decentralised and pilgrims who go by air, travel from Delhi, Calcutta, Madras as well as Bombay. Only the ship pilgrims sail from Bombay. The government gives SR [Saudi rials] 4600/- foreign exchange to each pilgrim.

It is unique and to the credit of the government that it pays subsidy to each pilgrim to the tune of Rs. [Rupees] 7500/-. Air travel from Bombay to Jeddah and Bombay is Rs. 19,000/-, while the Indian pilgrim pays Rs. 10,500/- and the government pays Rs. 7500/- as subsidy. I do not think any other government in the world, including Muslim countries like Pakistan, pays such subsidy to the pilgrims. The government sends special medical mission consisting of doctors and nurses to look after the health of the Indian pilgrims in Makkah and Madina. A joint secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs is given a special cell for Haj and the Consul General in Jeddah and Consul for Haj look after the Indian pilgrims in Jeddah, Makkah and Madina and make arrangements for their accommodation and return travel facilities.

Now, as the Founder Chairman of the Haj House in Bombay, let me also take this opportunity to discuss briefly the history of this premier facility for the Hajis in India.

Formerly Bombay was the only centre for the Indian pilgrims and they were housed in Saboo Siddick Musafirkhana in the city centre. But the problem of accommodation was unmanageable and the then President of India laid the foundation of Haj House in Bombay which is now ready for inauguration.

Trust Scheme

Haj House is unique in many respects. Apart from housing 2000 pilgrims at a time, it will also contain a Haj Committee office, shipping and airlines booking offices, banks for granting foreign exchange, Saudi visa office, a prayer hall, orientation classes, Islamic Library and Research Center.

Originally, the building was to cost Rs. 2.5 crores but now it has cost about Rs. 8 crores. All the funds were from the pilgrims themselves. Haj House construction was unfortunately delayed due to legal, technical and

bureaucratic delays. There was also a view whether the Haj Committee can create a Trust or own the property on its own. Originally, Haj House was to be completed in 1978 but the abnormal delay is a sad commentary. We had submitted to the government a draft trust scheme in 1977 known as "ALL INDIA HAJ HOUSE TRUST" for the ownership, management and maintenance of the Haj House. Muslims of various states of India are to be associated with this trust and form an All India Haj House Trust.

The huge income to be accrued from the trust is to be used for the construction of similar Haj Houses in the capitals of various states in the country for the same purpose as the Haj House in Bombay.

There is an erroneous impression that the Haj House was delayed due to the canteen. Originally, in 1976, it was agreed that the canteen would be shifted to the nearby piece of land belonging to the Haj Committee where now unfortunately a huge tank is built by the Police department. I had a meeting only last week with the concerned authorities and now the canteen is to be shifted to the piece of land and the completion certificate is to be obtained from the Bombay Municipal Corporation to enable the Haj Committee to shift to the Haj House and start functioning from Haj House itself.

The Haj House reflects the new awakening the new pride and the collective triumph of the Muslims of India. It is the biggest monument of the post-Independence era. Dedicated to the Muslims of India, it is a glorious symbol of Indian secularism.

Muslims Said Firmly Opposed to Family Planning

93AS0147B Madras *THE HINDU* in English
27 Oct 92 p 19

[Article by P.H. Reddy, Director, Population Centre, Bangalore: "Family Planning: Muslims' Reluctance"]

[Text] The article, "Muslims and family planning" (*THE HINDU*, Sept. 10) by Mr. Asghar Ali Engineer may be said to be somewhat prosaic, but it would be unfair not to acknowledge the merits of some points made.

The author is right in saying that all Muslim men do not have four wives. But a greater proportion of Muslim men compared to Hindu men, have more than one wife. The statistics on the sex ratio that there are 925 women for every 1000 men among Muslims and his inference that it is not possible for every Muslim man to have more than one wife are fallacious. It is not that every man can marry every woman in the entire population, ranging from infants to the elderly. There are marriageable age groups among men and women. It is necessary to remember that brides are five to seven years younger than grooms. In a rapidly growing population, younger age groups are larger than older age groups. This means that the number of marriageable women exceeds that of marriageable men. This is what is called marriage

squeeze. In fact, this is one of the important reasons for the continuance of the dowry problem. According to the 1981 census, the number of women in the age group of 15-19 years was 30.15 millions and that of men in the age group 20-24 years was 28.96 millions. Thus, if Muslim men desire to have more than one wife, quite a number of them can do so. But only about one percent of Muslim men have more than one wife.

It Will Take Centuries

Mr. Engineer is also right in saying that "having more than one wife does not lead to very high rate of fertility." He is again right in saying that even if the present rates of growth of Muslim and Hindu populations continue, it will take many centuries for Muslims in India to come close to the number of Hindus.

Some of the commentators on Muslim fertility argue that Muslims tend to have more children because infant mortality rate is higher among them than among Hindus. But he indirectly admits that it is lower among Muslims than among Hindus. I say "indirectly" because, quoting Kingsley Davis, Mr. Engineer says that higher incidence of widow remarriage and lower infant mortality rate among the Muslims were two important reasons for the higher growth rate of Muslims during 1891-1941. Since he does not say anything about the current infant mortality rate among Muslims, I presume that he believes that it is still lower among them.

In order to have a clearer and comparative picture, let us now turn to examine the growth rates, fertility, mortality, especially infant and child mortality, and proportions of couples practising family planning among Hindus and Muslims.

Although the preliminary results of the 1991 census were announced more than a year ago, information on the religious composition of the population is not yet available. But, according to the 1981 census, Muslims in Indian numbered a little over 75.5 millions. At present, they easily account for a little more than 100 millions. Muslims make up about a ninth of India's population. In fact, India is the fourth largest Muslim country, next only to Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan. In this numerical sense, 100 million and more Muslims in India are like a country within a country.

Muslims accounted for 9.91 percent of India's population in 1951, 10.70 percent in 1961, 11.20 percent in 1971 and 11.36 percent in 1981. Thus, the proportion of Muslims has increased by 1.45 percent between 1951 and 1981. In contrast, Hindus accounted for 84.98 percent in 1951, 83.50 percent in 1961, 82.72 percent in 1971 and 82.63 percent in 1981—a decline of 2.35 percent for the same period.

Muslim population growth rate was 25.17 percent during 1951-61, 30.69 percent during 1961-71 and 30.69 percent during 1971-81. The corresponding growth rates for Hindus were 20.29 percent, 23.69 percent and 24.14

percent. Thus, the growth rate of Muslims was higher than Hindus during the three decades.

Population change, including growth, is influenced by birth rate, death rate, net migration (the difference between in-migration and out-migration) and conversions. Data on in- and out-migration are hard to come by. Although some scholars believe that many Muslims from Bangladesh have migrated to India, we may take their number as negligible for present purposes. The growth rate of Muslims in India during 1961-71, when Bangladesh, as East Pakistan, was still part of Pakistan, was the same as that during 1971-81. This suggests that the volume of migration from Bangladesh to India during 1971-81 was about the same as that from East Pakistan during 1961-71. However, the growth rate of Muslims in India during 1951-61 was lower than during 1961-71 and 1971-81. We can take the number of converts as negligible. Therefore, the two components that remained to be examined are the birth rate or fertility and the death rate or mortality. Fertility can be reduced or regulated by adopting some method or the other of family planning. Therefore adoption of family planning by Hindus and Muslims will also be examined.

There are a number of measures of fertility. The most commonly used and the most easily understood measure is the crude birth rate expressed as the number of live births per 1,000 population per year. But this measure conceals the differences in age, sex and marital status composition of populations. One of the most reliable measures of fertility is the age specific marital fertility rate expressed as the number of live births per 1,000 married women in any of the five-year age groups of the reproductive age group of 15-44 or 15-49 years in a year. We will examine the fertility of Hindus and Muslims in terms of the two measures.

The Vital Statistics Division of the Office of the Registrar General, India, conducted in 1979 a study of the levels, trends and differentials in fertility in India and tabulated the data by a number of important independent variables, including religion. According to this study, the crude birth rate among Hindus residing in the rural areas was 32.6 per 1,000 population per year and that among the Muslims residing in the rural areas was 34.9. In the urban areas, the crude birth rate was 25.6 per 1,000 population per year among Hindus and 30.6 among Muslims. Thus, in both the rural and urban areas, the fertility rate was higher among Muslims than among Hindus. Mention may also be made of the fact that the difference in the fertility rates of Hindus and Muslims was wider in the urban than in the rural areas.

Let us now turn to consider the age specific marital fertility rates among Hindus and Muslims. As can be seen from Table 1 [not reproduced], in the rural areas, age specific marital fertility rates were higher among Muslims than among Hindus. This was true of all the five-year age-groups of the reproductive age group of 15-49 years, with the sole exception of the age group of 20-24 years in which age specific marital fertility rate

was higher among Hindus than among Muslims: the rate was about 272 live births per 1,000 married women in the age group 20-24 years per year among Hindus, as compared to 259 among Muslims. The differences in the age specific marital fertility rates among Hindus and Muslims were particularly pronounced in the age groups 30-34 years and 35-39 years. As can be observed from Table 1, the rate was about 179 live births per 1,000 Hindu married women in the age groups of 30-34 years a year, as compared to about 215 live births per 1,000 Muslim married women in the same age group a year. The corresponding rates for Hindu and Muslim married women in the age group 35-39 years were about 120 and 161 respectively. One of the main reasons for higher marital fertility rates among Muslim women belonging to the two age groups could well be that a lower proportion of them (or their spouses) were practising family planning.

Mr. Engineer says that the Muslim fertility rate "is higher by just half a percent compared to Hindus." As the readers can see for themselves, Muslim fertility rate is much more than "half a percent."

Data on mortality by religion are hard to come by. For the first time in India, the Demography Division of the Office of the Registrar General, India, has estimated, on the basis of the 1981 census data, fertility and child mortality rates. The estimates have been worked out by standard indirect estimation techniques. They have been classified by important independent variables, including religion.

In India, according to the above mentioned study, infant mortality rate was 122 per 1,000 live births among Hindus and 92 among Muslims. The difference is substantial by any reckoning. The child mortality rate up to age two was 126 among Hindus and 105 among Muslims. Similarly, the child mortality rate up to three years of age was higher among Hindus (135) than among Muslims (118). The child mortality rate up to the age of five was 155 among Hindus, as compared to 135 among Muslims. Thus, infant and child mortality rates were lower among Muslims than among Hindus. There is obviously no substance in the assertions often made in informal discussions and formal seminars that infant and child mortality rates are higher among Muslims than among Hindus.

Economic Status

Mr. Engineer, like some others, says that Muslims in India are poorer than others and are proportionately more illiterate. Hence the tendency for family planning among them is weaker than among others. "Unfortunately, data on economic status and literacy levels of people by religion are not available. But infant mortality rate is a good proxy for economic status and literacy levels of people: the lower the infant mortality rate, the better are the economic conditions and literacy levels. As has just been seen, infant mortality rate is lower among

Muslims than among Hindus. Moreover, a greater proportion of Muslims live in urban than in rural areas, whereas a greater proportion of Hindus live in rural than in urban areas. It is axiomatic that people living in urban areas enjoy better economic conditions are higher literacy levels than those living in rural areas. All these clearly indicate that economic status and literacy levels of Muslims in India are not as bad as they are sought to be made out.

The Operations Research Group (ORG), Baroda, has conducted three surveys of family planning in India—the first in 1970, the second in 1980 and the third in 1988-89. The 1970 survey covered a sample of 26,076 eligible couples selected from 254 urban and 704 rural settlements spread all over the country. The 1980 survey covered a sample of 34,831 eligible couples selected from 238 towns and 805 villages. The 1988-89 survey had a sample of 44,918 eligible couples, including 19,103 from urban and 25,815 from rural areas, from 205 towns and 1,271 villages. The findings can be said to be quite valid and reliable. All the three surveys were sponsored by the Union Ministry of Health.

According to the 1970 survey, 14 percent of the Hindu eligible couples, as compared to only 9 percent of the Muslim eligible couples, were practising family planning. In 1980 the figures were 36.1 percent and 22.5 percent and according to the 1988-89 survey, 46 percent of Hindu eligible couples, as compared to 34 percent of the Muslim eligible couples, adopted family planning.

Thus, in all the three survey years, a greater percentage of Hindu eligible couples, than Muslims, were practicing family planning. It may be observed that between 1970 and 1980, there was an increase of 22.1 percent in the proportion of Hindu eligible couples practising family planning, while the increase was only 13.5 percent in the case of the Muslim eligible couples. However, between 1980 and 1988-89, the increase in the proportions practising family planning was 10 percent among Hindu eligible couples and 11 percent among Muslims eligible couples.

This 1980 survey probed into the reasons for not adopting any family planning method either at the time of the survey or in future. This question was put to the respondents who were not practising family planning at the time of the survey and who said that they would not practise it in the future. It is important to know that as high as about 52 percent of such Muslim couples, as compared with only about nine percent of Hindu couples, gave the following reason: "not interested in family planning/do not believe in family planning/against religion." Mr. Engineer says, "But there is hardly any evidence of wilful disregard of family planning practices (by Muslim) to outbid Hindus in population." The foregoing analysis provides sufficient evidence that a far greater proportion of Muslim eligible couples than that of Hindu eligible couples are reluctant to accept the

concept and some method or the other of family planning. The intention may not be to outbid Hindus in number, but it may be to increase their proportion in the total population.

Young Muslims Seen Entering National Mainstream

93AS0116E New Delhi INDIA TODAY in English
31 Oct 92 pp 36-48

[Article by Farzand Ahmed, Ramesh Menon, and Javed M. Ansari, with T.N. Gopakumar, M.A. Mannan, and bureau reports: "Young Muslims: Forging a New Identity"]

[Text] Secular minded Hindus will never allow this country to become a theocratic state. The problem with Muslim leaders today is that they can only talk of Muslim problems but never come out forcefully on national problems like terrorism, communalism, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, and Assam."

Murli Manohar Joshi speaking? Or possibly Ashok Singhal expostulating against the evils of minorityism? Well, listen then to even more utterances from none other than Jawed Habeeb, high-profile Muslim rhetorician, Babri Masjid Action Committee (BMAC) activist and *bete noire* of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]: "We protested against Pakistan's raising the Babri Masjid issue because Pakistan has no business interfering in our domestic affairs. It is neither an Islamic country nor a democracy. It raises the problems of Muslims at international forums to embarrass India. When the Indian Parliament and secular parties stood like a rock on the Babri Masjid issue, it was the duty of the Islamic countries to appreciate this gesture."

Listen also to acid-tongued orator and one-time fundamentalist rabble-rouser Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi, the Hyderabad MP [member of Parliament] whose Majlis Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) has just embarked on a crash mass literacy drive: "Muslims are increasingly thinking about education and today's Muslim leaders ought to think about education as well to better their community's lot."

In isolation, Habeeb and Owaisi, so recently identified only with Hindu-baiting and stirring the communal cauldron, may justifiably be described as two proverbial swallows whose appearance does not herald a summer of mellowness and moderation among India's Muslims. But the strong new voice they now speak with, far from being just another novel political gimmick, is the voice of the Muslims, mostly the young, and increasingly the old, echoing throughout the madarsas, masjids, streets, campuses, and middle-class households of this vast land.

Muslims are fast changing in attitudes, political style and ambition. Nationalism. Tolerance. Reform. Education of women. Self-reliance. Middle-class aspirations. These are the new buzzwords among India's largest minority

community as it leaps out of its shell of isolation and bounds into a brave but uncertain new world challenging dogma and habit.

For a minority community, the challenge is existential. It seeks to take on and come to grips with the deprecatory images that have characterised its very being, given ammunition to communal hate groups and reinforced Hindu prejudices; a mullah-dominated, fatwa-ridden, and fanatically belligerent society, a complex sub-nation driven by misogyny, and a craving for the comforting cocoon of a pan-Islamic utopia.

Why this urge to change? Apart from socioeconomic compulsions there are some solid political reasons too. The '80s began on a gloomy note. In the aftermath of the devastating Moradabad riots, Indira Gandhi's secularism, to which they had faithfully rallied, began to look a bit saffron. During the 1984 elections, the Congress(I) began a naked pursuit of Hindu votes. The Babri Masjid was unlocked in 1986. The Hashimpura and Maliana killings followed in 1987. And shortly before the 1989 elections, the Bhagalpur riots tore the community asunder. Confused and bewildered, Muslims shuffled between the Imam Bukharis, Syed Shahabuddins and the new breed of self-styled secular politicians like V.P. Singh and Mulayam Singh Yadav.

With the politics of communalism now given centre-stage billing, a Hindu backlash like never before, accomplished what most Muslims were trying to prevent; the BJP's capture of the Hindi heartland. In 1990 when the Bajrang Dal stormed the Babri mosque, Muslims felt helpless. Their leaders, after raising communal temperatures, were nowhere to protect them as a chain of fresh rioting erupted. Muslims began to realise the futility of their own communal leadership as well as the gamesmanship of the so-called secularists. And the new quest was one of introspection and ways to shoot for the Indian mainstream instead.

Theirs is ultimately the toughest kind of struggle—a battle for a new identity in which no one can accuse them of having their cake and eating it too, of enjoying the benefits of a heterodox secular state, but still clinging to their own conservative theocracies. As a Muslim journalist admitted in an unguarded moment: "The trouble with us is that wherever we are in a majority we want a theocracy. But wherever we are in a minority we want secularism." And Indian Muslims, particularly the young, are aware of this hypocrisy.

Riding a Reform Wave: No More Talaq, Talaq, Talaq

Young Muslims have become the engines of what promise to be far-reaching changes in how they see themselves as a community and relate to the majority Hindus. The battle is being fought. But most importantly, Muslims are not using surrogates to achieve their aims, but are rather fighting from within.

There's a Muslim yatra afoot that nobody's really been noticing. But it heralds the intensity with which the

Muslims have taken to the streets—not against the rath and paduka yatras—but against themselves in the first post-Independence bid to attack their own social ills on a mass scale. The phenomenon is a measure of the growing confidence of the community which once cowered behind the apron-strings of its mullahs or quailed under their fatwas.

Muslim ulemas and religious leaders under the banner of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board—an organisation only recently identified with protecting the orthodoxy—have been criss-crossing the country highlighting the “social evils” which have crept into Muslim society. They are in the process of creating a nationwide network of monitoring cells to deal with complaints about *jahez* (dowry) and *talaq* (divorce). “*Talaq*” uttered thrice by an angry husband is no longer going to be the easy way of divorcing a wife, Maulana Mujahid-ul-Islam Quasmi, the Chief Qazi at Imarat Sharia (Bihar and Orissa) was so overwhelmed by the response he received from the audience, especially the cheering youth, that he even issued a fatwa banning *jahez* and asking the Muslim youth to revolt against their parents if they forced them to accept it. It carries a strong physician-heal-thyself message as Amir Jamaat-e-Ahle Hadis Abul Sami Jafri Nadvi was quick to warn: “If you want to reform society, first reform yourselves.”

This is by no means a mass movement to jettison the concept of Muslim personal law. Those who oppose it openly—for example Mohammed Yaseen, a reader in Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) who says that the “biggest disservice ever done by the mullahs was to oppose the Shah Bano judgment. How can you face the 21st century by living in the 14th?”—are in a minority. But it is a first step in dealing with the anomalies of personal law and bringing it more into alignment with mainstream secular thinking.

The same message was carried by a group of Muslim academics, led by former AMU vice-chancellor Syed Hamid during a whistle stop tour of Muslim-dominated areas of Uttar Pradesh. Drawn mainly from the Delhi University, AMU, and Jamia Millia, these teachers spoke at schools, madarsas, and mosques. The message: maintain Hindu-Muslim amity, rid yourself of social evils, spread education. In bastions of conservatism like Deoband, these latter-day heretics drew large female audiences, who applauded with each reference to educating women and allowing them greater independence. The “Taleemi caravan” as it is popularly known, is not a one-shot affair, and plans are already underway for an even larger tour.

The bottom line was modernisation and even social self-flagellation in which the speakers, instead of holding the government of the Hindus responsible for their backwardness, blamed themselves squarely. Self-pity was out, honest stock-taking in. As one speaker told a cheering throng: “We are not entitled to those comforts in life towards which we have made no contribution, such as power, telephones, science and technology.” This

was a clear attack on the Muslim madarsas limiting their courses to religious training to the exclusion of science, technology and the humanities.

None of this, however, is in any way an attack on or a denial of Islam. The reformers see the Quran as a liberal document that teaches love of one’s country, equality of women and progressive education. As Kerala’s Abubacker Musaliar sees it, the Holy Book asks each individual to conduct a life that befits his role in society. Vulgar display of wealth is as much an evil as failing to put money to productive use.

There’s no single leader or even a politburo of reformers heading the new movement. Clerics and academics are on the pulpits because they can feel a broadbased burgeoning from below. The altered ground realities include a passion for modern education, women breaking the custom of purdah, the desire to compete rather than grovel for special favours, questioning of mullahs and traditional political leaders, a desire to do well, and to make money. The per capita income of Muslims is 5 percent less than the national average of Rs. 4247. Political motivations apart, the metamorphosis stems from experience, practical compulsions and a changed economic and social environment. The Gulf boom meant jobs, fat remittances, more finances for the revival of the traditional handicrafts industry, and the emergence of a well-to-do class. Muslims saw that aspiring for middle-class Hindu status meant education, mainstream jobs, and breaking out of old moulds that kept them ignorant or made them cannon fodder for fanatical emotionalism. Entrusting their welfare to traditional leaders had gained them neither acceptance nor economic benefits.

Women Man the Vanguard: Mopeds, Blue Jeans and Computers

The most dramatic changes—the fountainhead of all reform—are in education and the transformation that learning has wrought in women. Young women who were once bogged down by conservatism—early marriages, a ban on education, purdah, self-denial—are determined to make the movement succeed. The likes of Sameena Usmani are no longer a rarity in what was once the conservative stronghold of Indian Muslims, the AMU [Aligarh Muslim University]. The engineering student found that her motorcycle had been strung with rope at the main gate of the campus as a warning from the fundamentalist Student Islamic Movement (SIM) to desist from wearing T-shirts and jeans. Defiant, she rode in the next day in a bright T-shirt and blue jeans. She was also told not to take part in a guard of honour on horseback for a Union minister, but she wore her breeches and galloped ahead. Bubbling with confidence and spirit she says: “For years we did what the maulanas wanted and see where they have landed us. Now, even they will not be able to stop the change.”

Says journalist Sadia Dehivi: “Young Muslims no longer want to be led like a herd, following anachronistic beliefs

which cannot stand the scrutiny of analysis." She should know. Her illiterate housekeeper's daughter, Ayesha Shabnam, 26, is today a lecturer in biology at the Hamdard Institute. Motivation: a middle-class dream born of her desire to emulate the good life she had seen in her mother's employer's household, as well as supportive parents who stood firmly against the naysayers and saw her through an M.Sc at Meerut University. She is a role model for other girls in her village who approach her for advice on opportunities for education and independence. "I realised that I had to move out of the purdah and change the course of events in my life. I have made all the major decisions in my life in consultation with my parents. My main aim was to get economically independent and break out of the psychological barrier that most of the community suffers from." She would like to marry, "but not without my having a say in the matter."

Shabnam was blessed with supportive parents. But Huma Nizami, 25, an economics lecturer at the C.U. Shah College in Ahmedabad, relates increasing incidents of Muslim girls fighting it out with parents to continue their education—a scenario she never saw a few years ago. She has broken tradition and likes her image. She wears jeans, drives a Kinetic Honda and finds that there are many who feel like her. Sometimes, an accusing finger is pointed at her by conservatives that she is not a "good" Muslim, but she does not care. Individualism is what matters. A major change in the attitude of the Muslim youth is seen in their views about marriage. Though most of them say that they would rather get married to the boy or girl chosen by their parents, they would certainly not marry blindly. "There is no way I am going to get married to some guy without seeing him and talking to him first," says Sameen Banu, 20, a first year M. A. (Psychology) student of SIET College in Madras. Such a statement even a few years ago would have been considered blasphemous.

The changes among girls are most remarkable both in terms of social attitudes and the choices they are making. Girls are now taking up engineering, medicine, teaching, and even agriculture. Huma Akhtar, 19, studying for her B.Sc in Botany even scoffs at the attitude of the mullahs: "These maulanas are more bothered about what we are doing rather than concentrating on their own work. For them Islam is in danger whenever we try to do something good."

What gladdens the heart of Zakia Athar Siddiqui, principal of the Women's College, AMU, is the frenetic search for proper counselling. "The girls accost me in the corridors and query me on what courses they should take up which would prove helpful in getting them jobs." What is significant is that most of these girls are first generation students. Most of their mothers never had the benefit of a formal education.

Consider some of the statistics: in 1989 the number of female students at AMU was 1,600. This year the number has doubled. And the applicants are double the

number of those admitted. Significantly, 40 percent of these are first generation students and they are the ones who are most receptive to change. Of the 500 students admitted for studies in medicine this year, 260 are Muslim males and 92, females. In 1977-78 there were 15 boys and eight girls. The number went up to 34 boys and eight girls in 1982-83.

Comparative figures also show that Muslim girls, once way behind their Hindu counterparts in education and performance, are becoming increasingly competitive. In 1976, the results of 13 intermediate colleges for girls showed that out of 809 girls, 468, or 58 percent of the students, passed the exam but not even one secured a first division. In contrast, 72 percent of Hindu girls from the same colleges passed with three first divisions among them. Now look at the dramatic changes that occurred in 1990: 98 percent of non-Muslim women passed the exam and secured 19 first divisions. Muslim girls improved their positions exponentially: 90 percent of them passed and there were 113 first divisioners.

All this is producing not only a major shift in attitudes but also building wave upon wave of confidence for Muslims to modernise and become part of the Indian mainstream. Studies among east Delhi Muslims showed that the teleserial *Udaan* had tremendous appeal among girls because they identified with a struggling Kavita Chowdhary who was fighting against heavy odds right from childhood. So was *Humraahi* as it portrayed girls fighting to study and do well in life. Says columnist Iqbal Masud: "This speaks eloquently of the psyche of the changing Muslims."

Ahmedabad gynaecologist Behram Ankleseria's patients are mostly Muslims. And he is fascinated by the changes he sees: no longer is his morning clinic known as the burqa OPD [outpatient department] as patients come in sarees and churidars. They are working women. Many of them have uneducated husbands. And because their wives are economically independent, their men have begun treating them with a greater degree of respect at home. "The women are more confident today as they are not afraid of divorce any longer," he says.

And family planning, once considered taboo, plays an increasingly important role in fostering this new spirit of independence. Ankleseria's nurse Kalavati no longer has to shout herself hoarse trying to convince mothers to use contraceptives. The women demand them on their own. This trend is borne out by studies conducted by the Family Planning Association of India, showing that Muslim women are as eager as Hindu women in accepting birth control. Dr. Sultana Khan, a gynaecologist who worked in the government maternity hospital for 25 years in Old Hyderabad, also substantiates this trend. Citing a 1989-90 survey done on family planning and family welfare, Dr. Khan says nearly 1,500 out of the 3,000 Muslims covered in the survey adopted family planning devices which was on a par with the number of Hindu women covered in the survey. This is especially

true of educated families no matter what their economic status. But the message has still to percolate down to the illiterate poor.

The determination among young Muslim girls to create a niche for themselves is obsessive. Ammu Quadsuya, 20, comes from a lower middle-class family in Madras. The eldest daughter of a postal clerk who died five years ago, Ammu has finished her B.Sc (Mathematics) braving all odds, and is now determined to get through the UPSC [Union Public Service Commission] examinations. She has enrolled herself in the coaching classes for the examination as being conducted by the SIET [expansion not given] Trust, with the help of the Union Welfare Ministry, for Muslim girls. "I want to achieve something in life and be independent," says Ammu with a determination which belies her background. She travels one and a half hours either way from her village which is about 50 km from Madras to attend the classes. Her mother who is educated only up to the 7th standard, cannot understand her enthusiasm. "She is still very conservative and wants me to get married and settle down," shrugs Ammu.

Educating Ahmed: Theology Takes a Back Seat

The rush for education in a society that has demonstrated that literacy equals self-betterment and socioeconomic advancement is only natural. And even more compelling for the Muslims who have been left way behind in this field by other groups. A survey conducted in 1987-88 by the Planning Commission revealed that against the national literacy rate of 52.11 percent, the average for Muslims was 42 percent. The state of the women was abysmal—while the national female literacy figure was 39.42 percent, the corresponding figure for Muslim women was only 11 percent. And the pattern reflected adversely on Muslims in job opportunities as well. In every civil service (IAS [Indian Administrative Service] and IPS [Indian Police Service]) exam held during the past decade, only between 1.2 and 1.7 percent of the selected candidates were Muslims, even though they comprise 11 percent of the country's population. This may reflect not so much discrimination but rather that because of widespread illiteracy they are unable to compete.

And this is the area where the change is most rapidly occurring. The rush is on not only to make up for lost opportunities in government jobs but also from possibilities of highly-paid jobs in the Gulf. Ashraf Usmani, a young maulana at the conservative Darul Uloom, Deoband, sums up: "Muslims can't be treated as a separate entity in India. If Indian youths are changing, the Muslim youths are also changing. They have the same aspirations and ambitions as their Hindu brethren have."

What is even more dramatic about this change is that it is occurring at the grassroots level. More and more madarasas—their teaching concept was developed after the advent of Islam to impart *dini taleem* (teaching in theology)—are going modern across the country. In educationally backward Bihar, for example, 1,600 out of 4,000 madarasas have

introduced modern courses like general science, mathematics, history, geography, political science, sociology, economics, Hindi and English and brought various courses at par with university degrees to encourage madarsa students to join universities.

But this trend is not just confined to Bihar. In Darul Uloom and Nadwat-ul-Ulum at Lucknow, a number of students, after finishing their courses, are joining either AMU or Jamia Millia Islamia and then aspiring to reach Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi.

These youthful aspirations, this modern mindset has rippled upwards and even affected the thinking of hardcore orthodox religious leaders. Maulana Afsar Raza, a spokesman of the madarsa Manzoor-e-Islam at Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, an important seat of learning and epicentre of the Barailwi school of thought, sees the trend as unstoppable. So he is swimming with the tide, but with a compromise: if a Muslim has three sons, he must send two sons to the general schools and one to a madarsa. The Jamaat-i-Islami, which prided itself on being a fundamentalist organisation is also going modern, admits its youthful General Secretary Mohammad Jafar. The organisation has set up 94 nursery schools (including English medium ones), 481 day schools for boys, 108 for girls, 477 part-time schools for boys and 76 for girls, 65 high schools and 36 colleges in addition to 15 technical centres across the country. Sarfrazuddin Siddiqui, editor of Urdu daily GARAJ at Moradabad, calls this an educational renaissance for Muslims.

And the results are palpable. Take the case of Patna's Ubaidul Rahman, 25, the son of a poor farmer from Muzaffarpur. As a madarsa student his fate seemed to have been sealed. He would have wound up teaching the Quran and Hadis to young Muslims in one of the numerous madarasas or leading the namaz as an Imam five times a day in a mosque. But he decided to become a primary teacher at the Islahul Muslimeen and convinced it to open its windows to the world of computer science. He is now among the five candidates selected through competition for advanced studies and talks more enthusiastically about software than the hard lessons of *deen*yat.

Perhaps Rahman would not have been dreaming of a new world had not the winds of change shaken the minds of the ulema too. Says 65-year-old Maulana Abdus Sami-Jafri Nadvi, the Amir of Imarat Ahle Hadis, the organisation of the most orthodox sect among the Sunni Muslims: "So far maulvis in madarasas taught only theory. But Allah has given everyone two hands, and anyone, whether Hindu or Muslim, using them will progress. We can't blame the government or others for our backwardness."

The urge to join the mainstream in education is also being reflected in the declining popularity of the Urdu medium schools. "There is a mad craze among the Muslims to put their wards in English medium schools which in a way has affected Urdu medium institutions," says Dr. Yousuf Kamala, who teaches at Osmania University, Hyderabad. Figures speak for themselves. An

official of the state education department says there has been almost a 30-percent cut in the number of Urdu medium schools and students studying in these institutions in Hyderabad over the past five years. Analysing the plight of Urdu medium schools, the survey says a majority of students had been admitted into such schools by their parents because they could not afford the cost of missionary school education. Though religious leaders are disconcerted by this trend, most Muslims view it as a logical outcome of their quest for modernisation.

Traditionally, Muslims in the southern states have been educationally and economically better off compared to their counterparts in the north. In Tamil Nadu, for example, there is at least one Muslim educational institution up to the degree level in every district. Kerala boasts of 50 Muslim educational societies. But enrollment has still been poor. The emphasis in the south is not just to move away from madarsa-type education to more general studies, but to increase enrollment and direct students towards job-related technical courses. Says T.P. Imbitchammed, secretary general of the All India Muslim Educational Society: "We are not satisfied if we produce only graduates. We need to have more representation in the services as well as in crucial fields like science, medicine, and technology."

In fact, the Muslim Educational Association of South India (MEASI), with the assistance of the Union Welfare Ministry, has started coaching classes for banking, Staff Selection Commission, and Railways examinations. Out of the 60 students who enrolled for classes last year for the banking examinations, two managed to get through and procure jobs. While out of the 54 students who enrolled for coaching for the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission examinations, 12 have qualified for the main examinations. The first year proved to be most frustrating for the MEASI, as only nine students enquired about the coaching classes, though letters had been sent to 900 Muslim students all over the state. "But this year there seems not be a lot of improvement because 65 students have enrolled after we had sent letters to 800 students," says Professor Kadar Basha, who is the coordinator for the programme.

The bottom line in all this—and this can be stated unequivocally—is that the hopelessness of the 80s is being replaced by a new-found realism and hope.

Struggle for Self-Reliance: Get a Job, Compete or Perish

Getting ahead also means honing the spirit of entrepreneurship. And increasingly, young Muslims are entering the self-employed, or tertiary sector of the economy as mechanics and repairmen or rediscovering the handicrafts sector.

Artisans are going modern. Zakir Ajmerwallah, 18, who dropped out of school, no longer makes textile print designs using wood. He uses computers. Many other printers around him in the Jamalpur area in Ahmedabad

are also trying to get into the high-tech mode. Increasingly, traditional artisans—textile printers, bangle makers, carpet weavers, in Azmgadh, Ferozabad, Veranasi, Maunath and Bhanjan—have turned to exports and trade and acquired wealth and status. Having made money, they send their children abroad to learn management, computers, medicine and engineering. All these years, they gave away their *zakat* (charity) for running madarasas or *yatimkhanas* (orphanages). Today, they pool in their money to build schools, training institutes and hospitals. Says former Kanpur MP [member of Parliament] Subhashini Ali: "It only shows that the community is consciously trying to change."

In the Muslim localities of old Delhi, dozens of night schools have come up as drop-outs and working children want to learn skills. Muslim organisations in the past few years set up around 159 'Islamic Financial Institutions' or 'Banks' to provide interest-free loans to the poor for business purposes. Says Naseem Farooqui, vice-chancellor, AMU: "Muslims seem to have their goals clearer now and want to make up for lost opportunities."

Self-employed youngsters such as mechanic Shahab Ali Khan in Badaun are showing the way. A school drop-out, he decided five years ago to aggressively push himself to succeed. Today, he is the best Maruti car mechanic in town. His workshop was plundered during the 1989 riots but he has built it up again from the ashes with sheer determination. A short distance down the road, three young brothers, Asif Khan, Yusuf Khan and Akhtar Khan are successfully running an auto repair shop. And studying. As Asif says: "Technical jobs, and not emotional issues, can save us."

And increasingly hard work rather than self-pity and communal emotionalism is showing the way to success. Today, Moradabad stands as an aggressive testament to this new reality. A decade ago the city was in flames as religious riots and Provincial Armed Constabulary brutality took a heavy toll on Muslims and virtually wiped out its artisan and trading economy. Today, the fires still burn but in the furnaces of small factories, all night and day, as Muslim businessmen and craftsmen work overtime to meet the demands of brass wave exporters. They don't have time even to think about the past and if one asks about it, the artisan would appear bewildered. Asks Syed Firdos, 30, "Why are you digging up old wounds?" Following the riots, the whole city was full of debris and life became miserable for the artisans for at least the next four years. But the scene began to change. A leading exporter Mohammad Akhtar (projected 1992-93 turnover: Rs. 25 crore) says business is now better than in 1980. The figures tell all: in 1980 there were hardly 400 exporters doing business worth Rs. 150 crore but today the number of exporters has jumped to 1,000 with an estimated turnover of between Rs. 350 crore and Rs. 400 crore.

Moradabad has clearly shown the way in more ways than one. As Iqbal Ansari, one of the manufacturers of brass ware, and witness to the riots, says, "People, instead of lamenting on the loss of business and cursing each other on communal lines, decided to cooperate and revive it."

And they have done it. Nobody even remembers what happened 12 years ago. This is the story of renewal that is inspiring and sustaining change.

Another great Muslim success story comes from Kerala. Dr. K. Moidu, 54, needs no introduction in Calicut. He heads a family of doctors—his three sons, Mehboob, Nawaz, and Ashik, his brothers, Dr. Kunjammed and Dr. Soppy, his daughter-in-law Hazina—are all in the medical profession and Moidu's all-purpose nursing home, opening soon, is poised to become a major medical centre in northern Kerala. But even his neighbours do not know that 40 years ago, the young Moidu walked 20 km a day to complete his school education at Kuttyadi. There were no Muslim doctors in Malabar in those days. Moidu now lives in a house that is sought after by film stars. It was built by a renowned young Muslim architect, 39-year-old N.A. Salim, the southern regional chairman of the All India Institute of Architecture. Salim and his firm, Salim Associates, have no time for minor projects. They are busy executing mega projects in many major cities in India and abroad. Salim has already bagged the contract for a 12,000-seat indoor stadium to be built at Cochin, the second largest indoor stadium in the country. He is busy designing a big planetarium at Calicut and has built innumerable hotels and mosques abroad. Says Salim of his approach to life: "I am basically against Muslims seeking concessions as a minority community or as a backward class. Let Muslims come up through competition."

This Is My Land: The Self-Styled Leaders Had Better Watch Out

Competing, not feeling sorry for themselves or blaming majority communalism for all their woes, are the new hallmarks of the thinking among young Muslims. By all logic, Muslims should be angry. The BJP is resurgent. Riots still break out. The guilty of Ghagapur go unpunished. The Babri Masjid controversy rages fiercely. Yet an uncharacteristic mood is coursing through the community—avoid confrontation. This is largely because Muslims have begun to feel that their use as vote banks by major political parties or their being pushed into self-isolation by their own mullahs has created a backlash in the majority community. The only answer, they believe, is modernisation.

The newly outspoken moderation of a Habeeb or an Owaisi are not the only examples of the fundamentalists losing ground. Perhaps nothing illustrates this better than the incident at Delhi's Jama Masjid on August 3 last year. Gathered together were all the important Muslim leaders at a conference organised by the Shahi Imam Abdullah Bukhari to chalk out a strategy on the Babri Masjid issue. Temperatures were running high, with some known hardliners doing their best to stoke the passions of the assembled crowds. However, the flash-point came when Maulana Kachauchvi, a former Congress(I) MP and the president of the Uttar Pradesh unit of the BMAC [Babri Masjid Action Committee] with pronounced fundamentalist leanings, started his fiery speech. He urged Muslims to prepare themselves to pay

back the majority community in their own coin. "The moment you hear of an attack on the Babri Masjid, raze every temple of your locality, village or town to the ground," was the venom he spewed. Outraged, Wasim Ahmed, national secretary of the Janata Dal, jumped on to the stage and snatched the microphone from the maulana and then proceeded to lambast him, in full view of the public. "It's people like you who have ruined the community, you ignite the fires and then vanish, leaving the illiterate masses to suffer the brunt, your rhetoric and actions help the RSS[Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh]-BJP combine and weaken the secular forces."

And during the last crisis at the Babri Masjid, an unusual event transpired at AMU. Some radical students called for bus loads of volunteers to go to Ayodhya for a confrontation. But they could not even find enough students to fill the buses. This is one of the clearest barometers of the sea change in attitudes. Young Muslims believe that a constant harping on the Babri Masjid issue will act as a brake on progress towards their fundamental aims—integrating into the mainstream, forging a new identity and making good. "Enough is enough. Let's have a solution that is fair to all," says Siraj Ahmad, a member of the AMU union. Students are angry with the religious and political leaders who have neglected the larger interests of the community. Journalist M.J. Akbar angrily points out that the Muslim leadership had a vested interest in keeping the community in a quagmire so that they could continue to dominate them. Points out Nuru Abidin, a horse saddle exporter in Aligarh: "The Bukharis and Shahabuddins had better watch out. The youth are no longer going to tolerate their whims." Many of them believe, in fact, that there is little to choose between them and the RSS—one believes that Muslims are an ignorant, emotional bunch who should be eliminated, while the other feels they are an ignorant and emotional people who need to be exploited. And it is this strait-jacket from which the community is struggling to free itself.

And now, even traditional Muslim political leaders, says Shahid Siddiqui, editor of NAI DUNIYA, "are being rendered superfluous. Today, a Shahabuddin needs Laloo Yadav's support in Bihar and not vice versa." A universal assertion is that the Congress(I) has always recognised Muslim leaders who have no base among the Muslims. Says Azam Beg, president of the Aligarh Students' Union: "The main problem is these self-appointed leaders of the faith. They would do the community a world of good if they kept away from politics. Imam Bukhari Saheb is a religious leader. Let him lead prayers. His approach is too emotional and only exacerbates our problems."

But even in this new mood, there is cause for caution. All it takes is a riot to set the clock back and bring out the mullahs and communal leaders as protectors. Any humiliation on the Babri Masjid issue would also be a defeat for the moderates. Just when things seem to be going right in Bihar, a Sitamarhi happens. And Muslim militancy, though in retrenchment, still bubbles beneath the surface. In riot-torn cities like Ahmedabad, the youth of the community are getting increasingly belligerent and some feel

fundamentalism is an answer. And in Kerala, the militant Islamic Sevak Sangh vows that if the Muslims are pushed against the wall, they will fight with arms. There is also the danger of rising expectations in a country in which the economy may not grow fast enough. And frustrated aspirations are historically a harbinger of reaction.

But not all the mullahs and maulvis are allowing fresh breezes to blow. There is a concomitant reaction occurring. Hazrat Maulana Suhan Raza Khan, the Sajjadah Nashin of Khaquah Alia Razawia at Bareilly, openly preaches that Muslims must maintain their identity instead of getting involved in economic development. He says: "There is an organised force trying to destroy us."

And there are several recent examples of intolerance. Professor Mushirul Hassan of Jamia Millia in Delhi, and Dr. Abid Reza Bedar, the director of Khuda Buksh Oriental Library in Patna had to face the wrath of Muslims. Hassan was condemned because he committed the "sin" of pleading against the ban on *The Satanic Verses*. Bedar was quoted having said that 'Kafir' as used in the Quran was a 'controversial' word. Religious institutions—Imarat Sharia, Adara Sharia and Imarat Ahle-e-Hadis—issued fatwas against him despite the plea by Bedar that he was misquoted.

Despite these undercurrents, the prevalent mood is one of optimism. Today, Pakistan is not even a distant dream. It had ceased to be one with the formation of Bangladesh. And it was further devastated with the persecution of Mohajirs in that country. The Iraq-Iran war and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait further destroyed aspirations of pan-Islamic solidarity. Today Muslims are beginning to see India as a dream that can succeed for them. This is not only because they have been able to see through the games of their own mullahs and leaders who have exploited their insecurities. It is also because, at a time when they were most insecure—throughout the recent Babri Masjid crisis—they found reason to believe that the majority of Indians and India's democratic institutions were innately secular and fair and gave them a sense of belonging. This land, they are now beginning to articulate, is my land.

Religion Said More Important Than Caste in Bihar

93AS0116B Bombay TIMES OF INDIA in English
23 Oct 92 p 12

[Article by V. Venkatesan: "Mandir Triumphs Over Mandal in Sitamarhi"]

[Text] It was amazing that a criminalised state like Bihar remained riot-free for more than two years till the communal volcano exploded in Sitamarhi recently. While the Bihar chief minister, Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav, could rightly claim credit for the achievement, he should pay attention to the message from Sitamarhi; his strategy to prevent communal riots was inherently vulnerable.

The riots were triggered when a Durga *pūja* procession insisted on taking a new route populated by Muslims some

of whom had resisted the diversion. Anti-social elements and local political leaders had apparently provoked the violent outbreak which claimed more than 40 lives.

On the face of it, it is tempting to add Sitamarhi to the long list of places where religious processions have caused communal conflicts. It has also been established, however, that religious identities became susceptible to exploitation by vested interests when there are significant local reasons for resentment against minorities.

Hold Resented

In Bagalpur, for instance, the Muslims' hold over the local silk industry was resented by some elements and this led to the riots there in 1989 claiming more than 1,000 lives. Similarly, in Sitamarhi's Riga division, fiddles and *biris* seem to have revolutionised the economic life of a section of local Muslims. Financial assistance pouring in through banks and other institutions have made them autonomous and prompted them to break with the feudal agrarian set-up. Indeed, the genesis of the large-scale communal violence in rural areas of the district can be traced to the agrarian imbalances prevailing in the region.

In a sense, the origins of the Sitamarhi riots can be traced to Mr. Yadav's dubious strategy of confronting the *mandir* with Mandal. He believed that, by mobilising the OBCs [Other Backward Classes] on the mandal platform, he will be able to resist the appeal of Hindu communalism. But the participation of OBCs in the riots, despite his denials, has disproved this myth. Indeed, the riots have shown that the OBCs are not a homogeneous group who can be relied upon for any political mobilisation on a sustained basis. Mr. Yadav cannot afford to ignore this stark reality.

More important, it shows that, confronted with a choice between religion and caste, particularly in a communally-surcharged situation, the common people are likely to be influenced by the former, rather than the latter. This had been proved in Biharsharif earlier. The poor low-caste Hindu and Muslim labourers engaged in bidi-making were successfully organised by the CPI [Communist Party of India] which held the assembly and Parliament seats when the riots rocked the town in 1981. After the riots, however, these labourers abandoned their class interests and began to identify themselves more vigorously with their respective communities and became more susceptible to manipulation by the elites of their communities.

Teamed Up

Historically too, as Mr. Gyanendra Pandey recounts in his book, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* the Hindu cultivating castes of Koeris, Kurmis, and Ahirs had teamed up with the upper castes of Brahmins, Bhumihars and Rajputs in the agitation to end cow sacrifices in the 1890s and 1910s in Bihar. Yet, the latter still considered the former as untouchables. In 1910s and 1920s, when the former became better organised and increasingly militant in pressing their

demands for a more respectable status, the latter joined with upper caste Muslim zamindars and unleashed violence against them.

In other words, Bihar's complex social set-up implies that the gains from Mandal can only be short-lived and that the antidote to communalism has to be found elsewhere. Failure to learn this lesson will mean that Muslims who were drawn to the Janata Dal in the last elections would soon feel alienated from it. Indeed, the riot has made the future of the Maya pact (Muslim-Yadav pact), nurtured by Mr. Yadav, uncertain. In any case the pact could not bury

the legacy of the 1981 Biharsharif riots which were essentially between Muslims and Yadavs over the plots of Muslim cemetery lands.

Muslims are already dissatisfied with Mr. Yadav's indifferent approach to the incomplete inquiry into the Bhagapur riots. They insist that the present inquiry be headed by three persons in view of the alleged affinity of Mr. Justice R.N. Prasad, present chairman of the inquiry committee, to the BJP. The inordinate delay in submitting the inquiry report will not only fail to instill confidence in the minorities, but render Mr. Yadav's promises to bring speedy relief and justice to the recent riot victims look hollow.